

# *The Reach of Song* an Appalachian Drama

THE DRAMA'S STORY  
BYRON HERBERT REECE  
MEET THE CAST & CREW  
MOUNTAIN CULTURE  
MAKE A QUILT  
GAMES & RIDDLES

*The Reach of Song*  
an Appalachian Drama

SOUVENIR PROGRAM OF GEORGIA'S OFFICIAL HISTORIC DRAMA





STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ATLANTA 30334-0900

Zell Miller  
GOVERNOR



WELCOME TO THE REACH OF SONG....

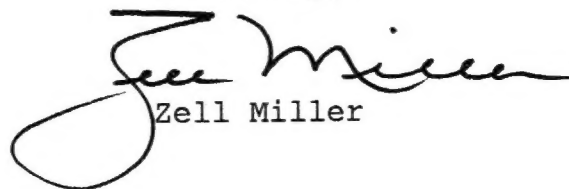
The product of pioneer Georgia mountain families, I take special pride in this production. Told through the eyes of Georgia writer Byron Herbert Reece, who was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, it depicts the customs, folklore, music, food, dialect, politics and geography of the admirable and hardy Americans who settled and developed the Georgia Mountains.

Designated as Georgia's official historic drama, THE REACH OF SONG captures the unique culture and lifestyle of these courageous and beautiful mountain people in a way that brings them alive and places them in your heart and memory forever. It is a tribute to the unique heritage of this region of our state, and it is my hope that through efforts such as this, the special culture of the region will be preserved for all to experience and appreciate.

I hope you enjoy THE REACH OF SONG and will tell your friends about it, so that they, too, will have the opportunity to enjoy this delightful drama.

With kindest regards, I remain

Sincerely,



Zell Miller





**THE REACH OF SONG** is produced by the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, P.O. Box 1720, Gainesville, GA 30503.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Charles Beaver  
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#### CREDITS

Music recorded by Klimchak (Studio Verite')  
Sound Effects: Exocet (Steve Boyes)  
Light Equipment: Duncan Lighting & Design  
Scenic Photos: Tom McConnell

#### FRONT COVER:

The front cover photo used on this souvenir program is the work of Russ Youngblood, better known to THE REACH OF SONG audiences as "Harry." Russ bought his first 35mm camera when his first son, Matthew was born and his interest and talent in photography has continued to grow. When not selling real estate in Hiawassee or appearing in THE REACH OF SONG, Russ enjoys spending his time in back of a camera lens, setting up perfect shots like this cover.

#### BACK COVER:

The scenic back cover was snapped at a Union County location by Dennis Nichols of Woods Grove in Towns County. Though Dennis, a mechanic, spends most of his time under hoods and auto bodies, he takes seriously his hobby of preserving in still photography the landscapes of the area even as they change. If a new building is slated to go up, or a new lot graded, Dennis grabs his camera and snaps a photo of the landscape as it looked "before." He also especially enjoys catching sunsets, lightning storms and other natural phenomena.

# The Reach of Song

## an Appalachian Drama

**June 11 - August 3, Tuesday thru Saturday Daily 8 p.m.**

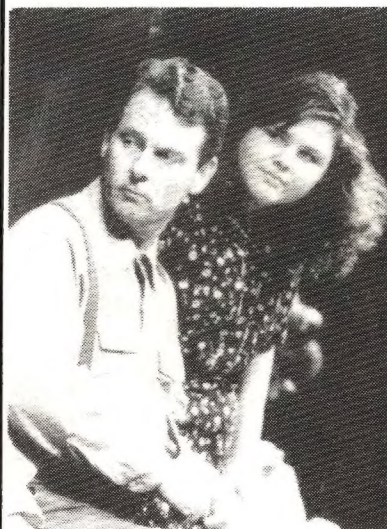
*Musical Theater in the Epic Tradition*

*Hiawassee, Georgia*

*At The Georgia Mountain Fairground*

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# THE REACH OF SONG

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*"From chips and shards in idle times, I made these stories, shaped these rhymes;  
May they engage some friendly tongue when I am past the reach of song."*  
--Byron Herbert Reece

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**THE REACH OF SONG** is a carefully-wrought chronicle of life as it used to be and still is today in the hills and hollows of southern Appalachia--a place where time once ran still and the mountain streams run chill and cold.

It is the story of the culture of a hardy, generous folk; and of the changes brought from the outside world that altered their culture that had been handed down virtually unchanged for generations.

The two-act drama, which begins and ends in the present-day, is told through the eyes of north Georgia writer Byron Herbert Reece, a Pulitzer Prize nominee, who was born, lived and died just

a few miles from the theater in which the drama is staged.

The first act deals with Appalachia as it was before World War II--with a way of life that had been handed down for hundreds of years in the hills and hollows.

In act two, the focus shifts to the changes in the lifestyle of the mountain people brought on by World War II and the effects of the outside world's invading culture. It embodies the memories and insights of those natives who are part of **THE REACH OF SONG** cast.

The play is interspersed with recitations of Reece's hauntingly beautiful ballads and poetry. Although Reece is the pivotal character through whose eyes the action is directed, the audience is also treated to glimpses of Reece as seen through the other characters, yielding an intimate knowledge of the ecstasies and the agonies of the artist within.

But the knowledge is delivered with a deft hand and a light touch with generous portions of mountain humor.

The product of more than two years of hard work, research, countless interviews with local people and constant attention to authenticity, **THE REACH OF SONG** is a story that unfolded even as it was written by playwright Tom DeTitta.

"Although the momentum started within me, it soon became one which I could barely keep up with," says DeTitta. "For the two years of research in the mountains,

I asked for ideas and received photos, insights, recollections and memories. There isn't a moment in the play that can't be directly traced to something someone told me. There are more--far more--people in this play than just the characters."

DeTitta sought input from Byron Herbert Reece's relatives, his former teachers, students and friends to make certain that the resurrection of Reece was as true to life as the mountain culture portrayed in the play.

The hard work and attention to detail paid off. **THE REACH OF SONG** premiered in 1989 in Hiawassee and played to an audience that grew by 50 percent each week during the last half of its run. Before its second season opened, it was named by the Georgia General Assembly as the state's official historic drama.

One secret of **THE REACH OF SONG**'s success is its incorporation of about 30 actors from the local community in its cast of about 40. These amateur actors participate in numerous workshop sessions and are encouraged to give active input into the authenticity of the drama. Professional actors complete the cast.

From the whirl and gaiety of mountain music and dancing, to the wisdom, gossip and age-old battle of the sexes meted out from the whittler's bench and the quilting bee, **THE REACH OF SONG** is Appalachian life as it was and is--preserved as clearly as jam in a Mason jar.





# SPOTLIGHTS ON THE REACH OF SONG

## THE STAGE SET:

About 500 of the 2,500 seats in the Anderson Music Hall on TVA Lake Chatuge are removed each season to allow for a specially-designed REACH OF SONG stage set that brings the action into the middle of the audience. Projection screens allow the audience, at appropriate moments in the play, to see actual photographs of Reece, his family, Ralph McGill and others as well as local World War II soldiers who answered their country's call to arms.

## WORLD WAR II PHOTOS:

The World War II soldier photos projected on the screen during the play are actual photos of local young men who served their country. The photos are contributed from a collection which is usually on display in Friendship Church near Hiawassee. Use of the servicemen photos from the era were the idea of local resident Joyce Holmes. She brought them to one of the first THE REACH OF SONG workshops because, having read the script, she thought they'd fit in. At least two of these young men died in the war.

## THE REECE TRACTOR:

One special prop used in the drama is a tractor actually owned and used by Reece on his Union County farm. The tractor is driven onstage during the play. The tractor is loaned for the drama by owner Charles Beaver of Blairsville.

## TODD'S DAHLIA FARM/SUCHES, GA.:

Todd's Dahlia Farm is located in the Lost Hollow area of the Suches community in Union County. Todd's Dahlia farm produced many varieties of dahlias for years before it closed, including a raspberry pink dahlia which Mr. Alvin Todd named "Byron Herbert Reece." Mrs. Zura Gooch Todd, who almost made her stage debut in the first production of THE REACH OF SONG at the age of 84,

and husband Alvin raised six children in a log home there. Cast member Nell Todd Holliday (REACH OF SONG 1990) is one of those six children. Suches is a small mountain community located in the rugged, mountainous section of Union County's southern end. A few mountains over from where Reece lived, Suches today is still so isolated that Union must have two schools--the

large consolidated one in Blairsville and a small one in Suches--necessitated by the winding mountain road that becomes impassable in winter. According to "Sketches of Union County History" volume one, when the Suches students were transported to Blairsville in 1932 and 1933, the route was "one of the longest school bus routes in the United States."



Photo by Jon C. Moon



### CHOESTOE:

Choestoe (Cho-ee-sto-ee) is the Cherokee name for the militia district in Union County, Georgia where Byron Herbert Reece was born. Its interpreted meaning is "Place of The Dancing Rabbits." Besides its beautiful mountain-ringed valleys, Choestoe has long distinguished itself in the area of education, in spite of one-room schoolhouses that were poorly-equipped. According to volume one of "Sketches of Union County History" (p. 35), "There are more college graduates from the Choestoe District according to population than any other place in Georgia." As recounted in *THE REACH OF SONG*, the Choestoe section has produced two state supreme court justices, one chief justice, and a state school superintendent.

### CLARK DYER -- LOCAL LEGEND:

Micajah Clark Dyer, Jr. was a

Choestoe inventor who lived on Stink Creek in the mid-1800s. (The creek was said to have been named "Stink" on account of the sour corn mash dumped into it by moonshiners.) Clark distinguished himself by piping gravity water into his house through hollow trees that were later replaced with iron pipes. He was always tinkering with some new invention in his shop on the side porch of his log home, and is said to have invented a perpetual-motion machine. Clark became a local legend with his attempted development of a flying machine--years before the Wright Brothers succeeded in their work at Kitty Hawk. According to stories handed down, Clark built a pedal-powered wooden flying machine, laid chestnut rails down the side of steep Rattlesnake mountain and tested his rig. Years later, after his death, his wife sold many of Clark's inventions, including his flying machine model to the Redwine

Brothers of Atlanta who supposedly later sold out to the Wright Brothers. It was several years later that the Wright Brothers built and tested their flying machine in North Carolina. Though no patents exist in Clark's name on his perpetual motion machine or his flying machine, some local folks old enough to barely remember Clark's attempts at flight say the story is true.

### COBWEB SUPPER:

In a cobweb supper, each "courtin' age" girl prepared a homemade meal-for-two of ham, sweet potato pie and the like, packed in a box she decorated herself. The box had tied to it a long string that was entwined with other box supper strings. The young men each took a string and followed it through the bushes to its end where waited a delicious box supper to be eaten in the company of a blushing young lady.

## REACH OF SONG IS GEORGIA'S OFFICIAL HISTORIC DRAMA

After only one short summer season in 1989, *THE REACH OF SONG* was named Georgia's official historic drama by the Georgia General Assembly.

The bill was introduced in the House by Representative Carlton Colwell of Union County, the home county of Byron Herbert Reece, and was co-sponsored by Rep. Ralph Twiggs of Towns County. State Senator John Foster of Habersham County and Lt. Governor Zell Miller of Young Harris (Towns County) guided the bill's unanimous passage in the State Senate.

"It depicts a lot of the mountain area and the life of Byron Herbert Reece," Colwell noted. "I think it's going to be a real asset -- not only to our region, but to the whole state."

Rep. Twiggs agreed, saying, "I certainly enjoyed the play, and I thought everyone did a tremendous job with it. I knew a lot of the people and places portrayed in the drama."



Rep. Carlton Colwell (far left) of Union County and Rep. Ralph Twiggs (far right) of Towns County present a \$25,000 check for *THE REACH OF SONG* from the Governor's Contingency Fund. Accepting the check on behalf of the drama are Bob Cloer (second from left), a member of the drama's board of Trustees, and Dr. Sam Dayton (third from left), executive director of the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, which sponsors the drama.



# **TOM DeTITTA --**

## **Playwright, Producer**

For those who know him, the last thing one would expect to find Tom DeTitta doing in a rare spare moment is planting rhododendron.

Yet, on a recent spring evening that is exactly what the 30 year old author/producer of "THE REACH OF SONG," was caught doing near the front steps of the house he rents in Murphy, North Carolina.

"Do you think they'll live?" he asked seriously, soaking the newly-planted shrubs with a garden hose.

Then, laughter sparkling in the dark brown eyes of his Italian-American heritage, he agrees quickly that planting bushes is not typical for him, but explains he finds it a relaxing counterpoint to the frenzy of preparing for another season of "THE REACH OF SONG."

Perhaps, it is suggested, he is putting down roots here? He admits to having lived longer in the southern Appalachians than anywhere else. He debunks the suggestion, though far less quickly than in the past.

Inside his post World War II home, the modern sectional sofa, modern art and houseplants are a surprising contrast. A barbell on the living room floor evidences efforts to keep in shape despite a hectic lifestyle. The playwright was an ice-hockey goalie in college.

A set of drums sits conspicuously near the front door, left over from days of drumming in jazz bands and theater pit orchestras to help earn his way through college, and which gave Tom his first valuable insights into theater.

A carved antique rocker bespeaks a special lady friend, while a sun porch filled with manila folders attests to his other great love in life--writing.

Tom discusses again his indirect route to authorship of "THE REACH OF SONG."

Coming south in the late 1970's, Tom received a liberal arts degree from Duke University. After graduation he later hitchhiked more than 8,000 miles through the

U.S.

But it was his fascination with the way of life in the southern Appalachian mountains that had drawn him here originally and bade him to stay.

Tom decided to write a book about his hitchhiking experiences and landed a job at the Cherokee Scout in Murphy.

Tom finished the book, hoping to get it out of his system, and turned it over to an agent and entered law school. He enjoyed law, but spent more time writing than studying.

Tom took off a semester to sell his book himself. ("I Think I'll Drop You Off in Deadwood" will be out from Cherokee Publishing later this year.)

He took a "temporary" position as editor of the North Georgia News that soon stretched into a year. As Tom's depth of understanding of the mountains continued to grow, he became more entranced with the lives of the mountain people he came to know and wanted to tell their story. A drama seemed the natural outlet for it.



Photo by Jon C. Moon

After meetings with various groups about the possibility of producing a drama based on the life of poet Byron Herbert Reece, DeTitta was awarded a grant from the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center to develop his idea.

Two years of grueling work, countless interviews and research, plus scouting and production work resulted in the "THE REACH OF SONG."

Being producer and writer of the drama gives Tom hands-on opportunity to continue improving the play, he explains between phone calls to find temporary housing for this year's actors.

Perhaps destiny brought Tom to southern Appalachia where another great indigenous writer, Byron Herbert Reece once found inspiration.

Like the rhododendron bushes in his front yard, Tom will no doubt take deeper root, and continue to make his crowning flower, "THE REACH OF SONG," a moving experience for his audience in every season to come.



# BYRON HERBERT REECE POET WITH A PLOW

(Sept. 14, 1917 - June 3, 1958)

*"Byron Herbert Reece could best tell the story of our mountains. His words hold the truth of yesteryear; his life was our lives, too, growing up on a farm in the shadows of Blood Mountain, and going through so many of the changes that we all faced. But what made him different started with his standing and watching, noticing—seeing the spirit into every little thing that he came upon." (Nell Todd Holliday (Nell) act, one, scene one, THE REACH OF SONG 1990)*

Byron Herbert Reece was either the greatest farmer who ever wrote, or the greatest writer who ever pushed a plow.

Either way, in his short lifetime, the poet/author/balladeer from rural Appalachia realized a nomination for the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry.

More important to the reticent Reece, he deciphered the magic words whispered from his natural world, recording them for posterity.

Named "Byron" after a butcher, "Herbert" after an insurance salesman, and called "Hub" for short, Reece was born fourth in a family of five living children.

The ancestors of his father, Juan (Jew-ann) Reece, and his mother, Emma Lance Reece settled in Choestoe, Union County during the time of the Cherokees.

Hub was born September 14, 1917 in a rough-hewn, single-room log cabin at the north base of Blood Mountain, the third-highest peak in Georgia, from whose base cold Wolf Creek meanders its way from the earth's bowels.

The cabin sat in a meadow now covered by man-made Lake Trahlyta in Vogel State Park.

Blood and Bald (at 4,784 feet the highest in Georgia) are part of the Appalachian mountain chain — the oldest mountains on earth.

With two older sisters, Eva Mae and Nina Kate, and an older brother, T.J., the cabin was snug.

Juan Reece found a larger dwelling a mile north of Blood Mountain in 1921; it was the old house where Emma Reece had grown up and married.

Built by her grandparents before the Cherokee removal under guard from the Indians, the house was very old and situated in a narrow valley on the banks of Wolf Creek where the sun and fresh air hardly touched it in the course of a day. The move would prove a fateful one, bringing disease to the household, but at the time it seemed the best option to Juan.

Hub cut his teeth on daily Bible readings, folk songs that had been handed down by oral tradition with little change from their Scotch-Irish origins, and ancestral stories.

Emma encouraged her young son's penchant for books as best she could, teaching him to read the King James version of the Bible, and Pilgrim's Progress.

Just before he turned six, Hub made the daily eight-mile round trip walk to Choestoe Elementary School. The birth of sister Jean that year meant Hub was no longer baby of the family.

He was so far beyond his peers that his teacher allowed him to skip the second grade.

When Hub was eight, he joined Salem Methodist Church. He also had a shocking encounter that year with his first automobile. Later on, he would develop a keen interest in cars and airplanes, but a chugging, noisy hunk of tin was no comfort to a young boy who had never known anything more contrary than a mule.

By 1930, a road had been graded through the gap to the south, and automobiles became a more common sight, passing only a few yards from the Reece home.

Entering high school in 1931 meant a trip of ten miles to the nearest town of Blairsville.

High school principal Dr. J. M. Nicholson tried to develop Hub's uncanny literary talents, but Hub scorned math. He still graduated second in a class of 19 in 1935.

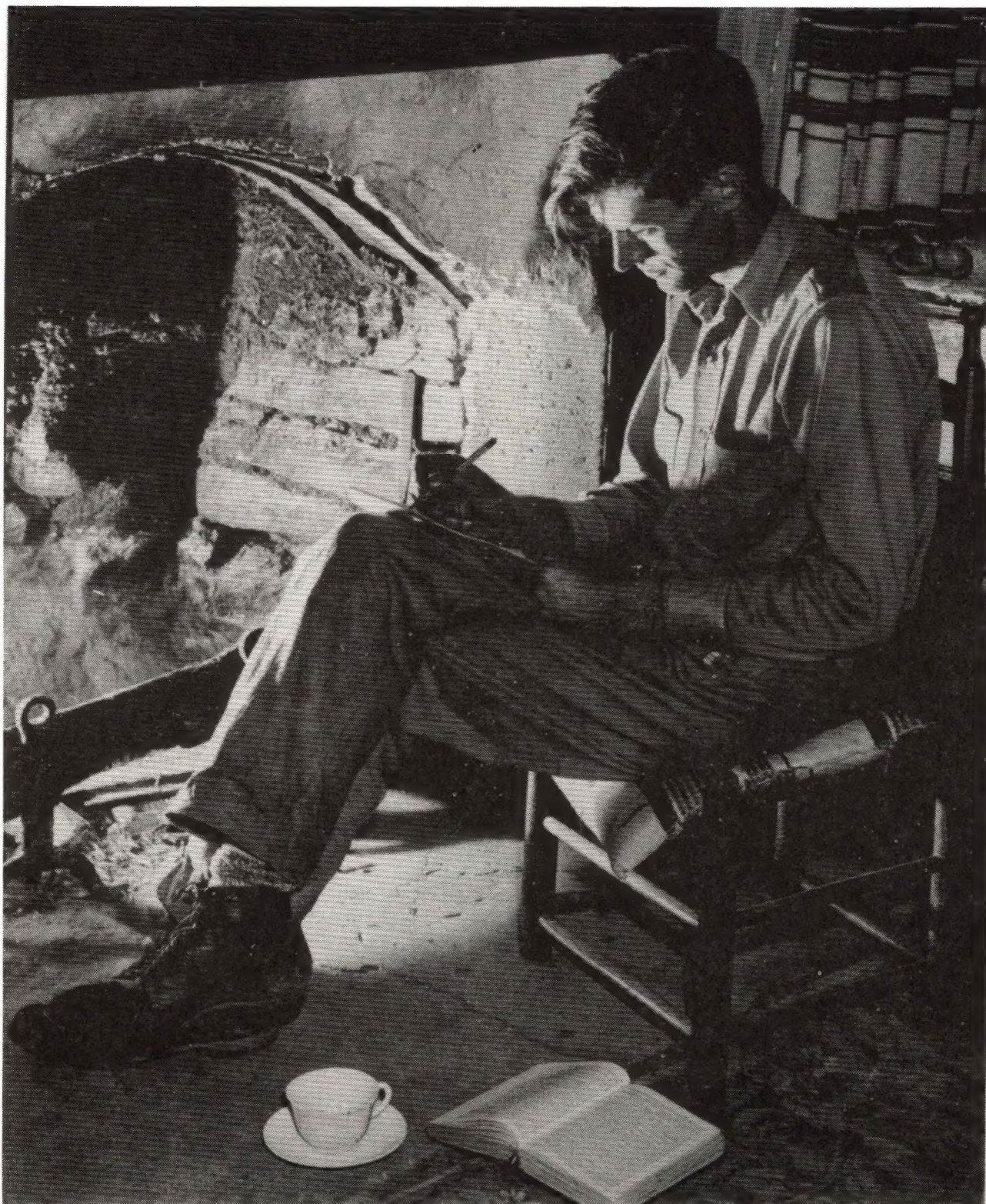
That fall, Hub entered Young Harris College, nearly twenty miles away.

Hub's transcript carries the recommendation of Dr. Nicholson: "Unusual mentality. Few people understand him. Cynical, truthful, dependable, determined. Has few contacts with folks, and wants but few. Except in mathematics, he is about the best pupil we have sent



(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal/Constitution)





(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

you. Widely read. Tastes are literary and artistic. Writes unusually good poetry and short stories, but is like Thoreau about his work. Knows he has ability, but doesn't give a straw whether you know it or not."

Hub's college education was soon interrupted by his father's illness; he dropped out to stay home and look after the farm.

Fate had handed Hub a life of sweating brow and aching back, with late nights sitting up, exhausted after a day's work, writing long after the fire had died down

on the hearth.

Hub didn't mind the hard work; he enjoyed farming and took pride in having one of the neatest farms on Choestoe. Life on the farm was pleasant, with family Bible devotionals, suppers of beans, cornbread and milk, and evenings gathered around the fire.

But the lack of other literary minds made it lonely. Hub often read for hours in his attic bedroom until the kerosene lamp oil ran out.

In 1936, Hub's father was diagnosed with tuber-



culosis. In a few years, his mother would also get TB.

Perhaps in an effort to exorcise the writing demon from his soul in the face of increasing family responsibilities, Reece burned all the poems he had written by the end of 1935. But the demon would not die.

In 1937, his first published poem, "Return to Remembrance," appeared in the local newspaper. By 1938, Reece had published a total of thirty-one poems in literary journals and magazines.



All this productivity came despite the weight of 25 acres to till, numerous stock to feed and water, wood to chop, cows to milk and all the other chores attendant on a farm.

Through a small scholarship, careful saving and working alternate quarters on the college farm, Hub returned to Young Harris College in 1938, where he was invited to join a literary organization, the Quill Club.

The club met weekly in the home of Professor Willis Lufkin Dance who became one of the greatest cultivators of Hub's talents.

In 1939, Atlanta Constitution editor Ralph McGill read one of Hub's poems and met Hub at Young Harris. McGill described him as not unlike a "young Lin-

coln" but too shy to read other works.

That winter, Hub again had to stay home. He kept up with college happenings with letters to his friend, Phillip Greear.

Spring quarter 1939, Hub returned to Young Harris. Quill Club visiting speaker, Roosevelt Walker, a University of Georgia English professor and expert on folk songs and ballads, so impressed Hub that he began to produce ballads after that date.

Hub's college career ended in 1940. He refused to take the required math and French courses to get his degree. More ominously, the raging war in Europe threatened to strike home.

Friends were marrying or joining up for military duty, but Hub had to go back to the farm and look after his sickly parents.

From 1940-42, Hub taught Zion Elementary School in the Dooly District of Union County. Qualification standards for teachers were not yet uniform, so Hub's lack of a degree was no problem.

But the Tennessee Valley Authority, which had begun work on a dam in North Carolina in 1937 was planning to flood the region's best low-lying farmlands in order to build a huge reservoir of water to use in generating electrical power. Most of Hub's students had to move, and his teaching position ended.

Still, the Reece family now had electric lights and bought a radio, on which Hub enjoyed listening to classical music picked up from a New York station at night. The radio also linked the family to happenings in the outside world.

After Pearl Harbor, Hub answered the draft call. But the army deferred enlisting an underweight young man who had a family history of tuberculosis and had a nervous "tic" on the side of his face.

Meanwhile, Hub published in smaller journals and magazines nationwide. His name was becoming familiar in print, but he was paid almost nothing for his work.

In 1943 Hub's first "big time" attention came from nationally known Kentucky author, Jesse Stuart.

Stuart was so moved by Hub's work that he went to bat for Hub with his own publisher, E.P. Dutton. Dutton liked Hub's work, and reluctantly agreed to publish a collection though there was almost no market for poetry — even great poetry.

Hub titled his new book, "Ballad of the Bones," after his ballad based on the 37th chapter of Ezekiel. The ballad won Hub the "Best Poem of the Year" award from "American Poet" magazine.

But the praise that meant most to Hub was that from his mother, who when she had read "Ballad of the Bones," declared in her quiet mountain way, "It's something."

Hub was mowing hay when the first copies of his book arrived from Dutton. That afternoon, he characteristically continued mowing.

"Ballad of the Bones," brought long-awaited critical acclaim. Hub was featured in "The Atlanta Journal" and other national publications.

The waves of national accolades for his poetry did not wash into Choestoe. To many friends and neighbors, "making a book" did not mean as much as tomorrow's weather.



(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal/Constitution)



Money did not come, but invitations as guest of honor did. Hub attended as many events as his home situation allowed.

On returning home from one such event, Hub learned his favorite professor, W. L. Dance, had killed himself in a dormitory room at Young Harris College.

Public appearances ate into the time for making a living. Hub began to decline them, but he could not escape his popularity. He answered his fan mail himself after long, hard days on the farm, then worked on new poems and novels.

Between long hours, worries over money and his mother's health, and working on his next novel, Hub's health was beginning to fail.

When "Better a Dinner of Herbs" was accepted by Dutton in 1950, Hub signed an advance contract for another novel; another poetry collection, "Bow Down in Jericho" was scheduled for summer release.

Publication of "Herbs" still was not enough for Hub to finance a new home for his family. Most of the money was borrowed from his sister's insurance policy.

His twenties behind him, Hub's young years had not been spent in the carefree pleasures of youth; moreover, in the current press of duty, poverty and work, there seemed little chance of love or marriage. The specter of old age shadowed the man who had never been young.

He sensed a growing urgency to get things done and a shortage of time in which to do them.

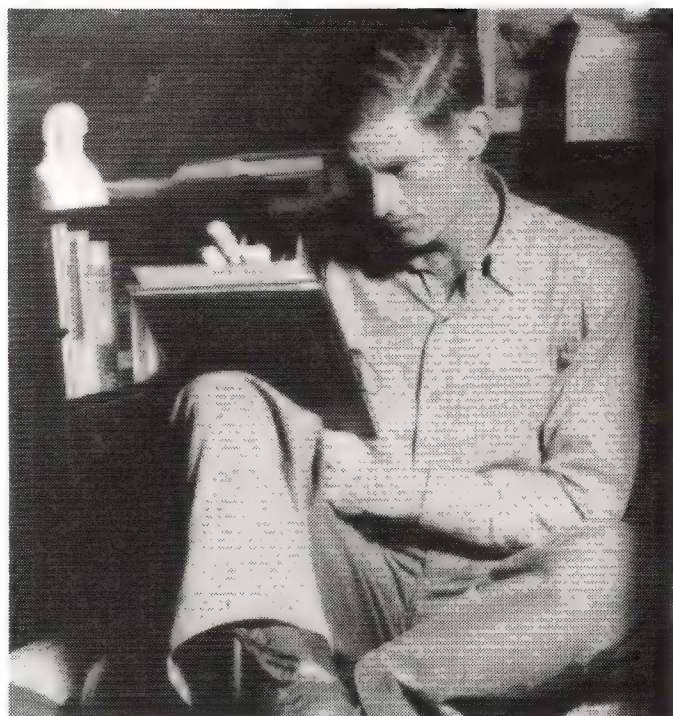
Hub did not like the city, with its over-warm buildings that made him ill. But, when he could, he accepted engagements in Atlanta, more than a hundred miles from home.

Hub accepted an offer to serve as a Poet-in-Residence at the University of California at Los Angeles. But as the time neared, his enthusiasm faded. The family's finances and health were poor. Hub was reduced to buying copies of his own books from Dutton on credit.

One of the few local honors he received came on April 17, 1950 when the Lions Clubs of Union and Towns counties with local chambers of commerce made Hub guest of honor at a luncheon in Blairsville. "The Atlanta Constitution" ran a large spread of photos and text, and WSB radio of Atlanta gave him six minutes of air time.

Only a week before leaving for California, Hub received the highest award for fiction by a Georgia writer from the Georgia Writers Conference.

The stint at UCLA proved tiring. Hub accomplish-



(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

ed little, producing only one poem during his stay, "I Know A Valley Green With Corn," reminiscent of the Choestoe Valley he missed.

It also proved unprofitable. After expenses and debts were paid, he had little left of the less than \$1,200 he received.

In 1950, Hub was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, but the honor was not awarded to him.

In 1952, Dutton published "A Song of Joy" and a



(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution)



Guggenheim award came through. Hub was also offered positions as Poet-in-Residence at the University of Georgia, Emory University, and Young Harris College. He accepted the one at Young Harris, commuting daily from the farm.

That fall, he accepted the fourth of five Georgia Writers Association Literary Achievement Awards he would receive in his career. Hub presented it to Young Harris College, where it remains on permanent exhibit in the Reece collection.

That winter, 1953-54, a doctor handed Hub the verdict on his health—tuberculosis.

In February 1954, Hub entered Battey Hospital, the state tuberculosis facility in Rome. The treatment was free, and he was promised the chance to go home in a few months if he improved. Hub chafed under hospitalization, and once commented that if he were to write about his experiences in the sanatorium, he would title it, "Chronicle in Hell."

A few friends visited, but most stayed away. One spring morning, Reece simply left the hospital and went home. He tried to discourage friends from visiting

for fear of infecting them, but a faithful few came anyway, like his old friends Philip Greear and wife, Mildred.

That summer, his mother died of TB. His familial champion for his work was gone. Just a week before Emma died, Hub penned one of his most haunting poems, "Lullaby," in which a mother sings her child to sleep.

Four years overdue, Hub finished "The Hawk and the Sun," about the lynching of an innocent black man. "The Season of Flesh" also came out in 1955.

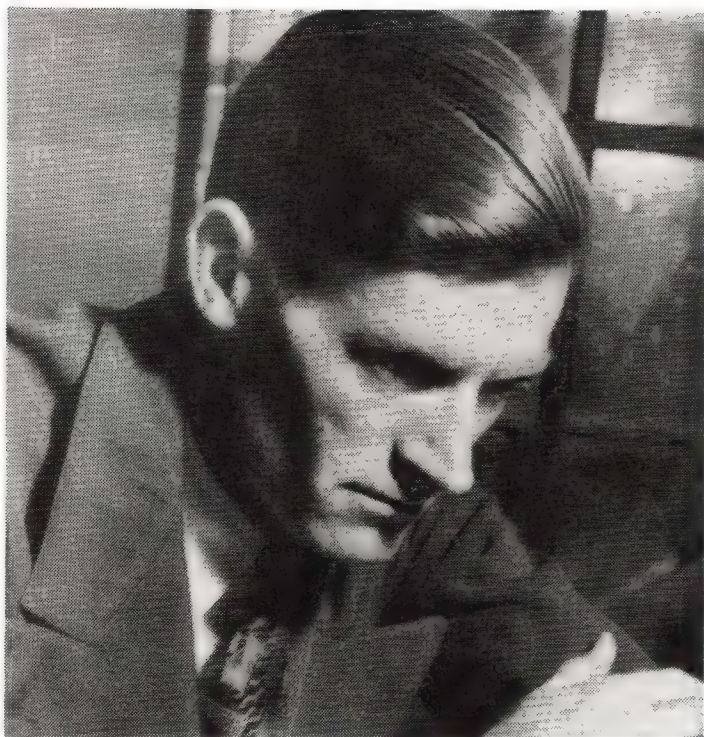
Hub contracted for another book, "The Axe and the Sword," which ironically, was to have been an epic history of the mountains. But it was never finished, despite a 1957 Guggenheim award.

In June 1956, Hub taught at Young Harris College because he needed the money. He wrote to Elliot Graham: "I've just reached my wall...the absolute limit of my energy and I couldn't do more...if my life depended on it...waiting it out is a luxury I can't afford anymore. Success and I just missed connections somewhere along the line...I've got to eat...So I'll meet



(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution)





(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal/Constitution)

*"You know, Byron was like us in so many ways, yet, in a lot of ways he was different. He never got to be famous, like, say, the Grand Canyon is famous. But when people find something he wrote, it's like what happens to a stranger coming over the mountain from Hiawassee into Young Harris for the first time. Fella might not have been expecting nothing. Might've thought he was just driving along Highway 76, no where nears anything like a Grand Canyon. But right when he tops the hill, all at once, there's the most beautiful view he'd ever seen. That's kinda what I've heard people say who read something of Byron's for the first time." (Maybelle, act two, scene three, THE REACH OF SONG)*

#### **Acknowledgements:**

Raymond D. Cook, "Mountain Singer," Atlanta, Ga. 1980, Cherokee Publishing Co.

Byron Herbert Reece Memorial Collections, Duckworth Libraries, Young Harris College, Young Harris;

Byron Herbert Reece Papers, University of Georgia Libraries, Manuscript Collection, Athens, Ga.

my English classes as long as I can..."

Hub stayed on campus and went home regularly to check on his father.

In the fall of 1957, Hub again taught part-time at Young Harris. He was smoking more heavily, drinking lots of coffee and not taking care of himself.

On June 3, 1958, Hub was found dead in his dormitory quarters with a bullet hole through his diseased lung and his .32 automatic caliber pistol at his side. His students' final exams were graded and Mozart piano sonata in "D" was playing on his phonograph. It was the same room in which his mentor Dr. W. L. Dance had killed himself more than twelve years before. In only three months Hub would have been forty-one.

He was laid to rest at the foot of his mother's grave in Old Union Cemetery in Young Harris, less than a mile from where he died and twenty miles from his Choestoe home. The writer who found such joy in the natural world had found the only release he knew from worldly cares.

Today, the Choestoe birthplace of Byron Herbert Reece also lies in a watery grave beneath Vogel's Lake Trahlyta, fed by the creek that whispered so much of its poetry to him.

But in the intervening years between that clear, crisp September day when Hub was born, to the last days of his lonely, disease-ridden life, the extraordinarily talented poet with a plow gave the world a collection of hauntingly beautiful works that will never die.



(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal/Constitution)



# DR. SAM DAYTON REMEMBERS BYRON HERBERT REECE

When he was a young man listening to his Young Harris College instructor, Byron Herbert Reece, read aloud the old English classics, Dr. Sam Dayton had no idea that one day he would have a part in bringing to life a drama about Reece, a talented Union County writer who would take his own life on campus the year Dayton was there.

"I can recall vividly how Reece could read aloud," Dayton says now. "He could even make Chaucer come alive. He had a talent for reading classic literature that went far beyond his formal education. He could make it both understandable and interesting." Reece's formal education had stopped with two years at Young Harris College.

Dayton characterizes Reece, who filled in as lecturer and taught English at YHC, as "a very in-

trospective, contemplative type of person who seemed to be very much alone regardless of the number of people around him."

After Dayton graduated from Young Harris College, he went to the University of Georgia, where he became a research geophysicist. His high score on the national test allowed him to take his choice of jobs. He settled on the Geophysics Division of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, where he stayed for three years.

But Dayton's work kept him out of the southern region he loved. Born in Gainesville, with maternal ties to White County and paternal ties to Banks County, and with cousins "all over" the northeast Georgia region, Dayton knew that his destiny lay back home. He knew the area needed his help in some capacity; the economy supported few jobs. For years, he had watched countless others in his family leave to find work in the big northern cities.

"Nobody has to tell me about the migration of Appalachians from the area, because I've seen so much of it in my family," Dayton says.

Realizing that he would never be able to work in his native region as a geophysicist, Dayton returned to the University of Georgia to get his doctorate in economic geography, which deals with matching businesses with their optimum location.

Fortunately, for the Georgia Mountains region, when Dayton sought an internship with the Atlanta Regional Commission, they had no money budgeted to take Dayton on. He was accepted at the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center (then the Georgia Mountains Planning Commission).

In 1969, he helped to establish an applied geography program at West Georgia College. Then in 1971, he returned to the GMRDC where he has remained to help promote planning and economic development in the Georgia mountains area.

As Executive Director of the GMRDC, Dayton is in a unique position to help improve the lives of residents in his home region.

Always open to a suggestion that might help with economic development, Dayton in 1988 heard an unusual proposal from writer Tom DeTitta, who wanted to develop a historic drama for the region.

"I get people that approach me every day with ideas," Dayton said. "But not many people come and say, 'I want to write a drama.' I immediately saw in Tom's idea an opportunity to set in motion a process that could be as important to my portion of the U.S. as UNTO THESE HILLS was to Western North Carolina."

Dayton notes that, while DeTitta saw the drama as an advancement of art, he himself saw it as an ideal economic development project.

"It was a perfect marriage of ideas and backgrounds," Dayton says now. "I see the drama as being a cornerstone of a tremendous amount of economic development in the southern mountains--not just the Georgia mountains area," he says, adding his hope that the drama will inspire other types of clean, tourism-related economic development in the region.

But THE REACH OF SONG is something more.

"It's something as representative of the state of Georgia as anything you could possibly find," Dayton says. "I identify with every aspect of the play. I'm most proud of the drama's authenticity."

Dayton notes that the drama lets those unfamiliar with the Appalachian area learn about it "in a delightful way" and, for those whose heritage it chronicles, it provides "a tremendous amount of nostalgia."



(Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Journal/Constitution)



# *The Reach of Song*

Executive Director . . . . .	<b>Dr. Sam F. Dayton</b>
Producer/Playwright . . . . .	<b>+ Thomas M. DeTitta</b>
Director . . . . .	<b>Eddie Levi Lee</b>
Composer/Musical Director . . . . .	<b>Phillip DePoy</b>
Choreographer/Dance Captain . . . . .	<b>Beth Petty</b>
Set Designer . . . . .	<b>Dr. Joseph Stell</b>
Lighting Designer . . . . .	<b>Paul R. Ackerman</b>
Costume & Wardrobe Mistress . . . . .	<b>Ann Wolf</b>
Business Director . . . . .	<b>Bill Wolf</b>

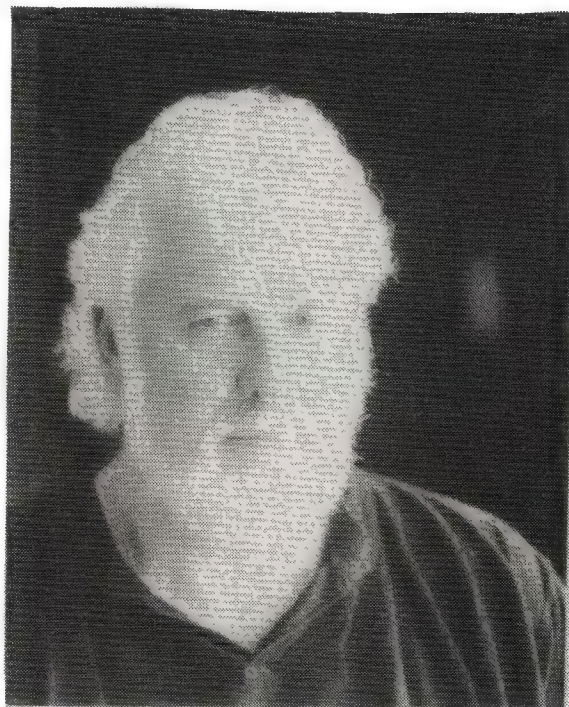
Stage Manager	Joel LaFleur
Technical Director	Timothy Schmidlin
House Manager	Tom Jeffery
Assistant Stage Manager	Jennifer Bell Burrell
Technical Assistant	Holly May
Technical Assistant	Stacy Jones

## CAST LIST

Berrong, Kris	Darrell
Bingham, 'Lizabeth	Emma
Black, Tim	Paul, Cheerleader
Briscoe, Christie	Cheerleader, Nurse
Buchanan, David	Caller, Newspaper Editor, Old Time Musician
Carter, Clinton	Band-Musicians, Father
Clark, Taylor	Al, Cheerleader
Crawford, Greg	Bob, Ralph McGill, Cheerleader
Cunningham, Howard	Band-Leader
Davenport, Ezra	Maybelle
Davis, Ginger	Understudy
*DeVries, David	Byron H. Reece
DeVries, Susan	Clogger, Clara, Scholar 4, Woman
*Evers, Bruce	Preacher, MC, Ledford
Farist, James	James, Old Time Fiddler, Song Leader
Holland, Stephen	Clarence
Holiday, Nell	Nell
Hunter, Erin	Sally Mae, Clogger, Cheerleader
Hyatt, David	Zack
Kelly, John	Understudy
Martin, Libby	Robin, Scholar 3, Bearded Lady
Palmer, Barry	Band-Musician
Petty, Beth	Emma Reece, Cheerleader, Young Woman, Snake Lady
Raymond, Kandice	Very Young Girl
Raymond, Kathleen	Young Girl
Raymond, Katrina	Young Girl
Raymond, Stan	Photographer, Sam Jones, EMC worker, Honest Homer
Roach, Erica	Erica, Girl Singer
Robinson, J.D.	Band-Musician
Rogers, Susie	Bernice
Simmons, Becky	Susie May, Cheerleader
Spivey, Bill	Bill, Publisher, Literary Editor
Thomas, Nelson	Old Tim Musician, Postman
Watson, Maggie	Understudy
Wilson, Tom	Larry, Doctor
Wolfersteig, Eloise	Jane, Aunt, Reviewer, Scholar Two, Hairdresser
Youngblood, Matthew	Clarence
Youngblood, Russ	Harry

\* Member Actors Equity Association  
+ Member Dramatists Guild

## THE CREW



**EDDIE LEVI LEE**

Eddie Levi Lee has made his living for a number of years as a director, actor, and playwright.

Besides serving as co-director of THE REACH OF SONG during its first year, Lee has served as Artistic Director at the Theatrical Outfit in Atlanta for the last two years. He has also directed at most other major Atlanta theaters including the Alliance Theatre, Seven Stages, Horizon Theater, and The Academy Theater, where he also served as Director of the School of Performing Arts.

Lee has acted in plays Off-Broadway, The Kennedy Center, Philadelphia, Chicago, Louisville, and Dublin, Ireland. On stage, he last appeared in *THE SEAGULL*, at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre. He has appeared in the films, *SHARKEY'S MACHINE*, *DOOR TO DOOR*, and *OLD DRY FRYE*. On television, he was Rev. Soames in *HEAT OF THE NIGHT*, *THE GATHERER* on PBS, and this fall Rev. Don Beverly Calhoun on the NBC mini-series *GRASS ROOTS*.

As a playwright, Lee has authored, or co-authored more than 20 plays, most recently collaborating with composer Phillip Depoy on APPALACHIAN CHRISTMAS and ODD NIGHT IN AN ODD PLACE with Rebecca Wackler and Larry Larson, he wrote Off-Broadway's TENT MEETING and ISLE OF DOGS. With Larson, he wrote THE ILLUMINATI PLAY and THE SALVATION OF IGGY SCROOGE, a rock version of Dicken's A CHRISTMAS CAROL, with music by Phillip DePoy. All four plays have been published and can be seen in productions in various parts of the world.





### **PHILLIP DePOY**

#### **Composer/Musical Director**

When Phillip DePoy followed his father to Atlanta years ago (his father played French horn in the Atlanta Symphony), he could not have known then that he would someday compose original Appalachian music for THE REACH OF SONG.

DePoy has studied traditional Appalachian music since 1968 and has been a student of mountain folklore since his undergraduate days when he conducted cultural and musical field research as part of his degree requirements. He minored in folklore and obtained a master's degree in Media from Georgia State University.

DePoy has played traditional music for twenty years, on dulcimer, guitar, banjo and mandolin.

To Phillip, an important part of his work with THE REACH OF SONG is the preservation of Appalachian Music he loves so well.

"It would be a tragedy if that style of music were lost," DePoy says. "Folk culture, the way it is embodied in the play, doesn't exist anymore in real life. Even twenty years ago, there were some people alive who still did these things. It's a folk tradition that has existed for a thousand years."

DePoy is a Composer-in-Residence for the Southern Theatre Conspiracy, and has composed for the Alliance Theatre (SEAGULL), as well as most other theaters in Atlanta. DePoy has just been named as the new artistic director for the THEATRICAL OUTFIT in Atlanta. He is the author of "TRANSPARENT BIRDS", a textbook. His play LAMB ON FIRE is set for New York Production by PLAYWRIGHT PREVIEW PRODUCTIONS and his newest play is a musical about angels. His music for HAMLET...THE MUSICAL has been nationally acclaimed, and his PHANTOM OF THE OPRY (with his brother Scott) continues to be a long running success. DePoy has also worked on the critical box office success APPALACHIAN CHRISTMAS which enjoyed a second season in Atlanta this past year. DePoy has been on the faculties of Georgia Tech, Mercer University, and Wesleyan College, and is Writer-in-Residence for the Georgia Council for the Arts.

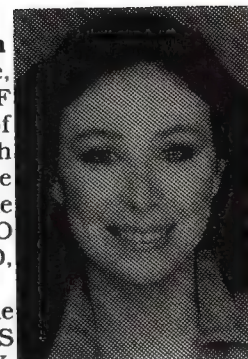
### **BETH PETTY**

#### **Choreographer and Dance Captain**

A Gastonia, North Carolina native, Beth Petty returns to THE REACH OF SONG in a new role, that of Choreographer and Dance Captain. Beth holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the North Carolina School of Arts, where she appeared in THE TEA PARTY, TWO FRIENDS, THE CAFE, RON-DAY VOO, and THE COMMERCIAL.

At the Neighborhood Playhouse, she has appeared in CROSSROADS, GIRLS OF SUMMER, THE TRAVELING LADY, and THE COUNTRY WIFE. T.V. and film credits include, THE GUIDING LIGHT, DEATH TRAP and A LITTLE SEX.

Other past theatrical experiences includes serving as module director for the North Carolina School of the Arts, teacher and choreographer at the Governor's School of North Carolina, a choreographer and performer at Piedmont Craftsmen, Inc. and choreographer and performer in DANCE VIEWS OF WOMEN. Beth teaches dance and continues to remain active in the arts in Gastonia.



### **BILL WOLF**

#### **Business/Production Manager**

Bill Wolf returns to THE REACH OF SONG for his third year having served last year as assistant stage manager. This year he finds himself in the position as business/production manager. He is a Pennsylvania native and graduate of Mount Union College, with a bachelor degree in Education. Wolf is now a local businessman with The Fireside Shop and spends most of his year selling and installing wood stoves and fireplaces. He also enjoys the craft of broom making.

"I am excited about THE REACH OF SONG drama being located in this mountain area. It has given me a chance at occupational diversity and to learn a new skill under very capable leadership. I feel THE REACH OF SONG is making an important contribution in preserving some of the local culture and advancing the economic viability of the area."

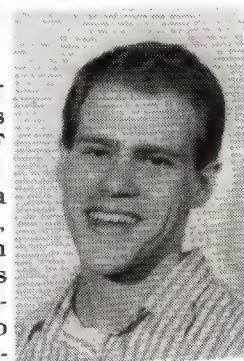


### **JOEL D. LaFLEUR**

#### **Stage Manager**

Wisconsin native Joel LaFleur returns to his third season of work as stage manager for THE REACH OF SONG.

LaFleur attended the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, N.C. from which he earned a B.F.A. in Stage Management. He has worked as Company/Stage Manager for the Pittsburgh Ballet for one season. He has also worked with the Atlanta Ballet as Company/Stage Manager, the Santa Fe Opera as Assistant Running Crew Chief, and as Stage Manager with Minnesota Repertoire in Duluth.





**DR. JOSEPH W. STELL**  
**Set Designer**

Dr. Joseph Stell designed the rustic, audience-oriented stage set for THE REACH OF SONG in four major pieces which can be dismantled and stored for convenience, then reassembled when needed.

Chairman of the Division of Fine Arts at the University of Georgia, where he is also Professor of Drama and head of Design in the Dept. of Drama, Dr. Stell has been on the UGA faculty for 23 years.

His designs include sets, scenery and lighting for productions in Atlanta, Philadelphia, New York City, Baltimore, Winnipeg, Canada, North Carolina and Georgia.

His design experience ranges from children's theater, opera, outdoor drama, and classics to new offerings in a variety of theaters.

Dr. Stell is also a theater consultant and author of a textbook on scenery design and construction.



**PAUL R. ACKERMAN**  
**Lighting Designer**

The special lighting effects in THE REACH OF SONG are the work of lighting designer, Paul R. Ackerman.

This Resident Lighting Designer for the Atlanta Ballet since 1984, Ackerman has completed more than forty original designs for the Ballet, including CARMINA BURANA, THE WATCHERS, ROMEO AND JULIET, as well as the annual Christmas production of THE NUTCRACKER.

With theatrical credits such as productions with the Alliance Theater, the Alliance Children's Theater and the Atlanta Opera, Ackerman was also chosen to design the inaugural season of shows for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's Octagon Theater in Montgomery.

He has been a frequent collaborator on shows at the Academy Theater's new facility in Atlanta since 1987. He received his training at the University of Virginia.

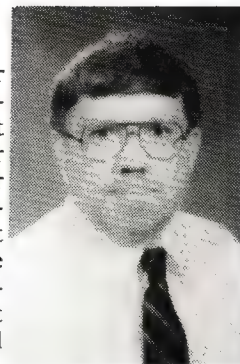
**TIMOTHY SCHMIDLIN**  
**Technical Director**

Timothy Schmidlin's credits for Technical Director, Scenic Designer or Scenic Artist, would fill a book and road-map: Canada, Florida, Georgia and the midwest. At Wayne State University (WSU), University of Georgia (where he is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate), Dekalb Community College, he not only participated in drama production but also received theater degrees with honors and awards. Timothy works during the off-season as Technical Director for the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta.



**TOM JEFFERY**  
**House Manager**

Tom Jeffery, House Manager for THE REACH OF SONG 1990, is chairman of the Division of Fine Arts at Young Harris College. He holds a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Theater Technology from Florida State University and has done post-graduate work at Columbia University and Cambridge University. Before coming to Young Harris College, he taught theater at LaGrange College, Tufts University and the University of Wisconsin.



**ANNE WOLF**  
**Costumer & Wardrobe Mistress**

Anne Wolf returns for her third season of THE REACH OF SONG having served last year as assistant costumer. She is an Ohio native and graduate of Mount Union College with a bachelor degree in Education. Mrs. Wolf now resides in Towns County and is office manager for Modern Mtn. Media, publisher of the Smokey Mtn. Shopper and Business Report.

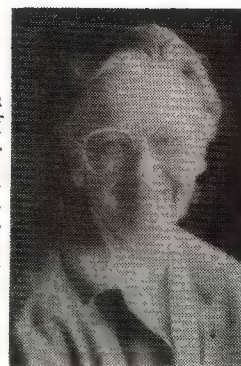
Anne's first love is her weaving loom. She is an active member in the Chattahoochee Handweavers Guild in Atlanta and the local Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild. Some of her hand-woven articles can be found at the Craft Store in the outer lobby.



**SARA SMITH STILLWELL**  
**Director of Group Sales**

Sara returns for her fourth year with THE REACH OF SONG as director of group sales. Sara is also responsible for the Young Artists Presentation and Senior Outreach Quilt. Her past experience in theater includes: TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE and MARK TWAIN. Her marketing experience includes: Director of PR/AVD Stone Mtn. Park, Publicity Director Stay n' See Georgia.

Sara received her BSHE from University of North Carolina, her AB-journalism and Masters in Gerontology from Georgia State. Her hobbies include civic service projects, reading the people.





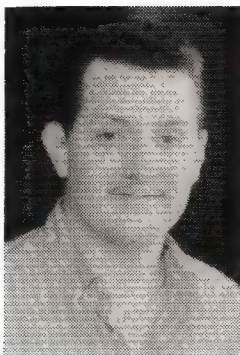
**JENNIFER BELL BURRELL**  
**Assistant Stage Manager**

Assistant stage manager Jennifer Bell Burrell is a 1979 graduate of Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, N.C. She received a B.A. in Speech/Theater Arts. Jennifer majored in communications. She has worked at several TV stations in production and was a deejay at WCVB Big 6 Radio in Murphy, N.C. This is her second season with THE REACH OF SONG.



**STACY JONES**  
**Assistant Technical Director**

Working with THE REACH OF SONG for the first time is Stacy Jones. As a member of Georgia Mountain Fair Technical Staff, Stacy brings with him on-site experience.



**PROPERTIES ASSISTANCE**

Harold Cornwall  
Mrs. Irene Berry  
Young Harris College  
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Brown  
Dale Elliott  
GMARDC Senior Centers  
Zura Todd  
J. William Denton  
Hubbie Hyatt  
Carroll Hedden

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Young Harris

Mr. Terry Taylor  
Taylor & Taylor Construction  
Hiawassee

Honorable Ralph Twiggs  
Representative, District 4, Post 2  
Hiawassee

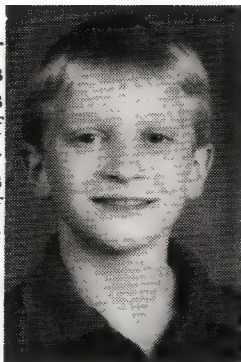
Susan Vardeman  
President, Towns County Chamber of Commerce



# The Cast

## KRIS BERRONG

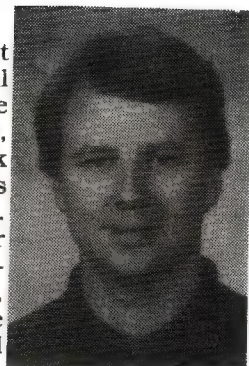
Kris, returning for a second year with THE REACH OF SONG, continues to delight audiences. At thirteen years old, he has mastered the age old craft of buck dancin'. A dancer with the Kountry Kid Cloggers since he was four years old, Kris has been named the winner of the buck dance contest at the Blairsville Sorghum Festival for three years. Among numerous appearances, Kris entertained at the Sun Coast Travel Show this past February with other REACH OF SONG cast members.



## DAVID BUCHANAN

New to THE REACH OF SONG but not to public performances David will bring his musical experiences to the drama this season. He plays the guitar, mandolin, fiddle, and banjo at state park events and festivals. He currently makes up half the duo of "Buck and Nelson".

David is a special education teacher in Habersham County and enjoys playing old time music, square dancing, fishing and hiking. He will be seen in the roles of newspaper editor, postman, and square dance caller.



## LIZABETH A. BINGHAM

Rising college junior 'Lizabeth hails from Conyers, Georgia. The Young Harris College graduate returns to THE REACH OF SONG for a second year. A seasoned performer relying on her previous theatrical ranging from CHICAGO, GODSPELL, THE KING AND I, THE DIVINERS, THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING, NUNSENSE, and ENDGAME. 'Lizabeth will portray Emma this season as well as understudy the role of Bernice. When asked about hobbies she replies, "Who has time for hobbies!"

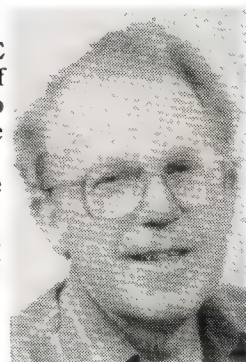


## CLINTON CARTER

Back for his third year with THE REACH OF SONG, Clinton Carter of Cumming, Georgia brings thirty-two years of musical experience to the drama.

He has played in square dance bands, Georgia Mountain Fair shows, fiddle conventions, and has organized an Old Time Fiddle Band, and sung gospel music with church choirs. Other involvements include Georgia Folklore Society meetings, contests, charity and benefit shows.

A Korean War Veteran, Carter enjoys life on a small cattle farm to which he has retired.



## TIM BLACK

Gainesville, Ga. native Tim Black makes his appearance this year in THE REACH OF SONG. Tim will portray the role of Paul. Tim's many stage and film credits include STEAMBATH, WEST SIDE STORY, GULLIVER AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE, MANDRAGOLA, IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT and due out in the fall the USA Networks production of LOUISIANA BLACK.

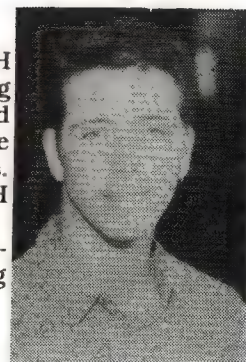
Tim says he looks forward to this summers production and is happy to be a part of a project to help preserve the mountain heritage.



## M. TAYLOR CLARK

Taylor Clark comes to THE REACH OF SONG from Atlanta by way of Young Harris College. Taylor has performed since grade school and remained active in theater throughout his college years. This is his first year with THE REACH OF SONG, he will be portraying Al.

His hobbies include singing, dancing, basketball, weightlifting, watching movies, and reading plays.



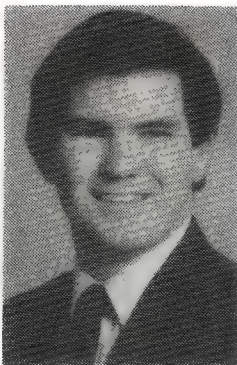


### **GREG CRAWFORD**

Greg Crawford will make his appearance in the 1991 production of **THE REACH OF SONG**.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the University of Florida where he appeared in such productions as **WIZARD OF OZ** and **MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM**. He has also worked behind the scenes as properties manager for the Center Stage Players production of **DRACULA**.

Greg will portray the roles of Bob, Ralph McGill, and Cheerleader. He will also understudy for the roles of Al and Paul.



### **\*DAVID DeVRIES**

Atlanta actor, David DeVries will step back into the leading role of Byron Herbert Reece in the third season of **THE REACH OF SONG**.

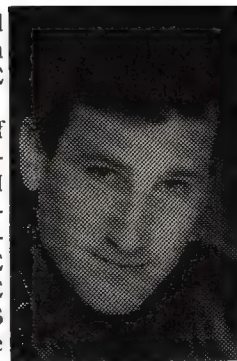
DeVries brings to his portrayal of Reece a wide background of acting experiences which includes **BABY WITH THE BATHWATER**, **I'M NOT RAPAPORT**, **A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN**, and **THE LION IN THE WINTER** at the Theatrical Outfit; **THE GLASS MEMAGERIE** and **THE BOYS NEXT DOOR** with Theater on the Square.

In addition to acting, DeVries has worked as director for several plays including **BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS**, **THE MIDDLE AGES**, **THE ACTOR'S NIGHTMARE** and **LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL**. DeVries is also one of the leading voice talents in Atlanta.

He earned his bachelor of arts degree at the American University in Washington, D.C. and took conservatory training in London, England.

David also took on a new role as husband this year. His new bride is Hiawassee native, Susan Walldroup-DeVries.

\*Member Actors Equity Association.

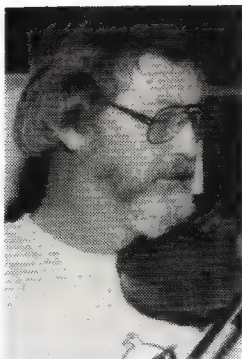


### **FIDDLIN' HOWARD CUNNINGHAM**

This member of the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame stands tall in the affections of his Hiawassee homefolks, fellow musicians and music lovers throughout the Southern Appalachian region.

"My family always played music a lot," says Howard. "Although there were some that looked down on any kind of stringed instruments, partly because they were associated with dancing which was a no-no.

Thirty-seven years ago, Howard founded the Country Music program at the Georgia Mountain Fair. His music nickname "Fiddlin' Howard" makes plain his love for music. He now has retired from sales after thirty years. He and wife, Alice Hicks Cunningham, have four children and four grandchildren.



### **SUSAN WALDROUP-DeVRIES**

Appearing for the third season of **THE REACH OF SONG** this year, Hiawassee native, Susan DeVries spends most of the year selling insurance as the agent for Walldroup State Farm Insurance in Hiawassee.

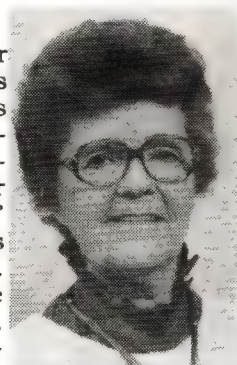
Susan is also the new bride of David DeVries, who portrays Byron Herbert Reece in **THE REACH OF SONG**.



### **EZRA DAVENPORT**

Ezra, who is back for her third year of portraying Maybelle, will be 76 years old this year. A local amateur actress who lives in Branan Lodge, Mrs. Davenport's previous theatrical experience includes school plays "since grammar school" and the lead role in "Lullabye" in 1987 given by Center Stage Players at the John C. Campbell Folk School. Used to singing in the public since childhood, Davenport sang in a quartet, in church choirs and singing conventions for years.

She keeps busy as a member of Eastern Star, executive committee member of AARP, and Sunday school teacher at Antioch Baptist Church.

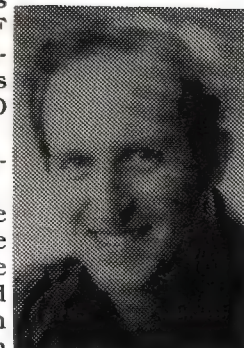


### **\*BRUCE EVERS**

Atlanta actor, Bruce Evers returns for his third year in **THE REACH OF SONG**. He enjoys working in the mountains, where he worked several years ago with another outdoor drama, **UNTO THESE HILLS**.

His other credits include an appearance as Ahab in **MOBY DICK/REHEARSED** at Theater Emory, three seasons with the Georgia Shakespeare Festival, appearances at the Alliance Theater in **TREASURE ISLAND**, and **OUR TOWN**; and at Theatrical Outfit in **TERRA NOVA** and **RASHOMON**. Motion picture and TV credits include **IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT**, **FAST FOOD**, **THE UNCONQUERED**, **THE ANNIHILATORS**, and **INVASION, USA**.

\*Member Actors Equity Association.





### JAMES FARIST

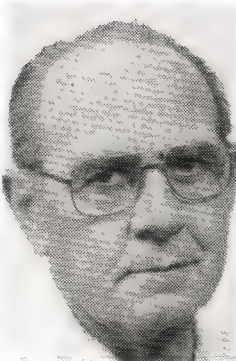
Back for another year of THE REACH OF SONG, James Farist is a Hiawassee actor who adds his touch of authenticity to the drama.

Born to an old-time Baptist preacher and reared in Ellijay, Georgia, Farist spent his early years leading the singing at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Gilmer County, Ga.

At 48, this resourceful man taught himself to play the fiddle and began playing with bands ten years later.

Farist has also appeared in the Atlanta production of APPALACHIAN CHRISTMAS.

A retired diesel engine mechanic, Farist has lived in Hiawassee for the past twelve years with his family. He enjoys antique cars and fiddling.



### DAVID HYATT

As a pathological liar Zack Haskins in THE REACH OF SONG, David Hyatt says "the part suits me, I love to tell lies and tall tales."

This former student of Byron Herbert Reece at Young Harris College says, "I feel very much at home with the part and the play," adding that he feels a special tie for the story having known Reece personally. Some of Hyatt's recollections of Reece are told in THE REACH OF SONG, through Zack.

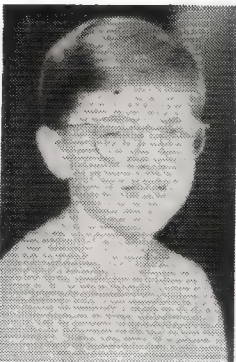
Hyatt holds a B.S. degree from the University of Georgia. He has delivered the mail for 33 years.



### STEPHEN HOLLAND

Stephen Holland, 11, of Hiawassee is back this year for his third appearance in THE REACH OF SONG.

Stephen is a member of the gifted program at his school. His past experience includes church, public plays, and musicals. Stephen is an active member of the Boy Scouts of America and enjoys camping and hiking. He finds working with THE REACH OF SONG a "learning experience" that lets him "meet neat people."



### LIBBY MARTIN

Though she holds a degree in Business Administration, Libby Martin, of Hayesville, N.C. has amassed her dramatic experience through community theater appearances with the Licklog Players group.

She has appeared in productions of LIL' ABNER, EVERYONE LOVES OPAL, FINNIANS' RAINBOW, BROADWAY' BEST, ANNIE GET YOUR GUN, THE PAJAMA GAME, and THE SOUND OF MUSIC.



### NELL TODD HOLLIDAY

Nell Todd Holliday was one of six children raised in a log home by Zura and Alvin Todd, who had a Dahlia Farm at Lost Hollow in the Suches area of Union County for many years. One variety developed by the Todds was a raspberry pink dahlia named "Byron Herbert Reece" after the late author whose story is told in THE REACH OF SONG.

Nell has three married sons and four grand-daughters. From a one-room school (six years) she went on to earn a Master's Degree in Education. She has taught middle school in North Georgia for seventeen years.



### BARRY PALMER

A resident of Cleveland, Georgia, Barry Palmer has enjoyed banjo music since his early years when he remembers his grandmother playing on an old banjo which she admonished him to handle with respect. Years later, when his grandmother died, one of the first things Barry inherited from her estate was the same banjo that she used to play.

He has appeared in high school drama, an opera, and he has played in a chamber orchestra at Brenau College, in the Gainesville Symphony, and a jazz band on the west coast.

Barry, 31, is Director of Pharmacy at Towns County Hospital and is a staff pharmacist at Lanier Park Hospital.



### ERIN HUNTER

Erin, a Hayesville, N.C. high school student has acted since age ten and brings a wide theatrical experience in community theater productions to THE REACH OF SONG. She has appeared in THE SOUND OF MUSIC, ANNIE, THE WIZARD OF OZ, OLIVER and ALICE IN WONDERLAND.

In church and school productions, she has worked in S10, ROCK ON, THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER and THE BURNING OF THE WITCH.

In addition to acting, Erin enjoys writing poetry.



### KANDACE RAYMOND

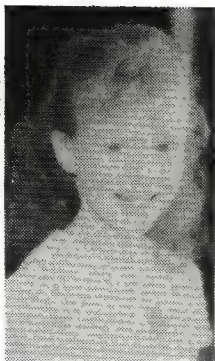
New to the drama this year is 9 year old Kandace Raymond. She will be portraying one of the young girl roles and will be singing in the chorus. She attends Towns County Comprehensive School and will be in the 4th grade next school year.





### KATHLEEN RAYMOND

With her energetic smile Miss Kathleen Raymond will dance and sing in her debut in THE REACH OF SONG. The 6 year old is right at home on the stage. Kathleen will be in the first grade next year at Towns County Comprehensive School.



### J.D. ROBINSON

A Cleveland, Georgia musician, J.D. Robinson's musical interests are varied and began early in life.

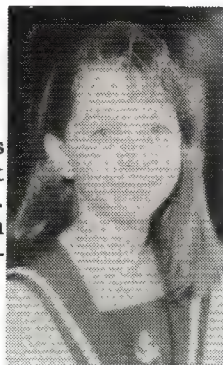
He has played guitar since the third grade, and at age seventeen, took up banjo-picking, and has played professionally since age 18. He toured the U.S. and Canada for 2 years, working one-night shows.

In addition to banjo, he plays the drums, bass, pedal steel, fiddle and mandolin.



### KATRINA RAYMOND

The third of the three Raymond girls is Katrina who is also making her first appearance in THE REACH OF SONG. This 11 year old will also be singing in the chorus and will understudy the singing parts of Erica Roach.



### SUSIE ROGERS

Susie looks forward to the current season "because of the results of the first two seasons...People from everywhere loved it." She adds that the positive comments from audiences are the motivation that she needs to work even harder on this year's show.

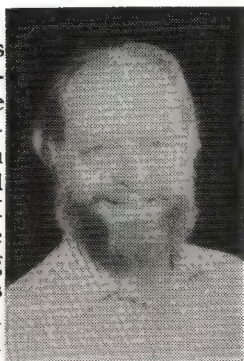
Susie will be portraying Bernice this year. When asked about her new role, she responded, "I look forward to the challenge of such a demanding role." She will be drawing from personal background experiences in her creation of Bernice.

She resides in Hayesville, NC. and attended Western Carolina University.



### STAN RAYMOND

The father of the pretty Raymonds is Stan, who is also making his first appearance in THE REACH OF SONG. The Furman University graduate participated in the drama program in both high school and college. He is a local developer and realtor with RE/MAX Hiawassee Realty. His hobbies include sports, coaching youth sports, and song writing. He will be portraying various roles in the drama including: Sam Jones, EMC worker, Honest Homer and the photographer.

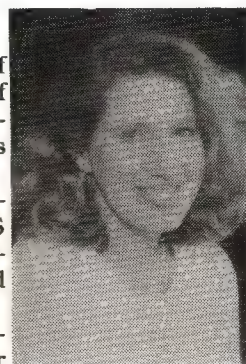


### BECKY SIMMONS

Becky Simmons, 17, a resident of Morganton, GA. and a 1991 graduate of Fannin County High School will be appearing in THE REACH OF SONG as Susie May.

Her past theatrical experiences include THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER, HILLBILLY WEDDING, FAME, THIS IS A TEST, and DEAR WORLD.

Becky has maintained many extracurricular activities throughout her school years including cheerleading, chorus, drama, and FCA.



### ERICA ROACH

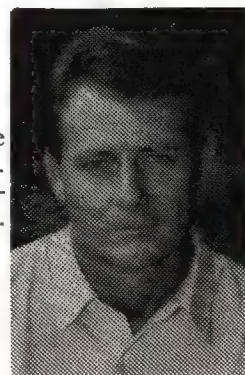
The petite blonde songbird in THE REACH OF SONG, 13 year old Erica Roach makes her third appearance with the drama this year.

Active in her church choir, and the "Adopt-A-Grandparent" program, Erica has appeared in the Licklog Players production of OLIVER and has been soloist in school programs. She is a student at the Clay County School System.



### BILL SPIVEY

Bill is happy to be returning for the third season of THE REACH OF SONG. He would like to dedicate this year's performance to the memory of his daddy.







*"Showplace of  
the Mountains"*

For More Information Contact:  
**GEORGIA MOUNTAIN FAIR, INC.**  
P.O. BOX 444  
HIAWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546  
Phone (404) 896-4191  
Fax (404) 896-4209

## PRESENTS 1991

### *Schedule of Events*

Ray Stevens &  
Williams & Ree ..... April 27

Vern Gosdin &  
Marie Osmond ..... May 11

Alan Jackson &  
Tammy Wynette ..... June 1

Ronnie Milsap &  
Sweethearts of the Rodeo ..... August 31

George Jones &  
Johnny Paycheck ..... September 21

Barbara Mandrell ..... October 12

Fall Music Festival ..... October 18-20

Mountain Fiddlers  
Convention ..... October 25-26

Conway Twitty &  
T.G. Sheppard ..... November 2

**THE REACH OF SONG** June 11 - August 3, Tuesday thru Saturday Daily 8 p.m.



*"Please lead us in a song Brother James."*

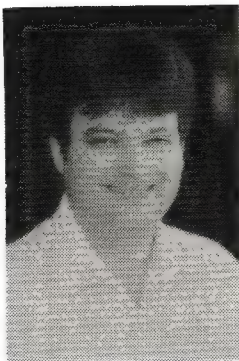


*"My Daddy used Castor Oil."*



### NELSON H. THOMAS

Nelson H. Thomas was born and raised in the North Georgia Mountains. He and his wife Shelley live in Blairsville with their 2 children, Patrick and Caroline. Nelson is a real estate broker and assists his wife in operating Mountain Gymnastics Center. He attended UGA and NGC where he received a BBA in marketing. His sideline for many years has been performing traditional and contemporary Appalachian music.

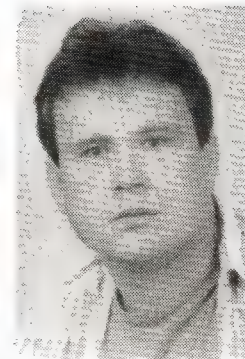


### RUSS YOUNGBLOOD

Hiawassee native Russ Youngblood, brings to his third season of THE REACH OF SONG his seasoned portrayal of Harry Smith.

This former high school drama director and current real estate agent at RE/MAX Hiawassee Realty has appeared on stage through both high school and college. One of Russ's two sons, Matthew, appears in THE REACH OF SONG with him.

When not acting or showing property, Russ enjoys professional free-lance photography. Many photos, including the front cover, in this program are some of his work.



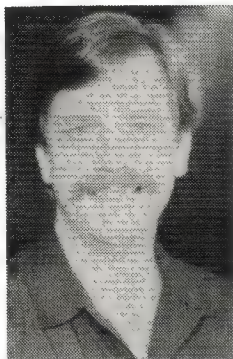
### TOM WILSON

Tom Wilson holds B.A. in Drama from Brock University and attended St. Catherine in Ontario, Canada.

He came to Blairsville from Daytona Beach, Florida bringing his wide theatrical experience with him to THE REACH OF SONG.

He has appeared in more than 40 dramatic productions including TAMING OF THE SHREW, CROSS AND SWORD, TWELFTH NIGHT, WAIT UNTIL DARK, and ANNE OF A THOUSAND DAYS.

He became involved in THE REACH OF SONG because, he says, "I wanted to become involved in local theater and meet people."



### UNDERSTUDY/SERVICE CREW

Christie Brisco

Ginger Davis

Maggie Watson

Robin Mauney - Craft Manager

Linda Jean Jeffrey - Box Office Manager

Joeta Youngblood - Food Service Mgr.

### ELOISE SMITH WOLFERSTEIG

Appearing for the first time in THE REACH OF SONG is Hayesville resident Eloise Wolfersteig with a wealth of dramatic musical experience.

Mrs. Wolfersteig has appeared in such productions as MATCHMAKER, SOUTH PACIFIC, ANNIE, WIZARD OF OZ, OLIVER, FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, DEATH OF A SALESMAN to name just a few.

In her spare time, she enjoys writing poetry, painting, gardening and computer graphics.



### MATTHEW YOUNGBLOOD

Eleven year old Matthew Youngblood is at Towns County Comprehensive School, where he has appeared in school plays.

Back for his third year in THE REACH OF SONG with his dad, Russ Youngblood, Matthew enjoys working with the drama because he finds it exciting to be a part of recreating the mountain life that he has heard about from his 87 year old grandfather.

When he is not acting, Matt enjoys adding to his thousands of baseball cards, writing, and fishing.



Photo by Jon C. Moon



# REACH OF SONG: REACHING OUT THROUGH OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Beginning with its very first year, THE REACH OF SONG outreach program extended the drama's enrichment and cultural opportunities into the area community. The outreach program effectively spanned the "generation gap," allowing both young artists/writers and senior citizen groups to have part in a heritage that is uniquely theirs.

## SENIOR OUTREACH

The senior outreach program was developed with assistance from the Area Agency on Aging, Senior Center Directors, North Georgia AARP representatives and senior citizen volunteers.

Through senior outreach, older area citizens were given the opportunity to contribute to THE REACH OF SONG drama that depicts lifestyles that most of them knew by experience.

Thirteen Senior Centers produced an original quilt in 1930's colors with quilted applied squares depicting mountai imagery inspired from the writings of Byron Herbert Reece. The quilts are used onstage, assuming a role as an important stage prop.

In addition, seniors were recognized by special "Senior Citizens night" attendance opportunities for those 55 and older, and several cast opportunities for older adults were included in THE REACH OF SONG.



**Previewing the art - "THE REACH OF SONG" cast members (L-R) Ezra Davenport and Kris Berrong get an advance look at some Young Artist Presentation works. The 250-piece exhibit will be in Anderson Music Hall during the run of the Drama June 12th - July 28th.**

## YOUTH OUTREACH:

Through cooperation and assistance from schools, libraries, the Reece publisher, the Hospitality Training Specialist from the Georgia Dept. of Industry, Trade & Tourism, and local business volunteers, area young people were encouraged to learn more about Byron Herbert Reece through informational displays and materials.

In addition, they were offered an opportunity to express themselves on the topic of their cultural heritage through visual and language arts, with their works put on display in the theatre during THE REACH OF SONG season for visitors to admire. Those who contributed art or written pieces were given certificates and were honored by presentations from the cast on young artist nights at the drama.

"It is always a joy to see young talent in the arts encouraged," said Dr. Sam F. Dayton, executive director of the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center. "These presentations are our opportunity to recognize students who are learning, growing and expressing the reflections of their life in the mountains."



## OTHER OUTDOOR DRAMAS YOU'LL WANT TO VISIT

### **ANASAZI: THE ANCIENT ONES**

By Sharon French. Call 505-327-9336, or write to the Anasazi Pageant Foundation, 203 W. Main Street, Farmington, NM 87401, for times and ticket information.

### **FROM THIS DAY FORWARD**

By Fred Canford. Call 704-874-0716 or write to the Old Colony Players, Inc., Box 112, Vadese, NC 2690, for times and ticket information.

### **HATFIELDS & MCCOYS, HONEY IN THE ROCK**

By Billy Edd Wheeler. Call 304-256-6800 or write to the Theatre West Virginia, Box 1205, Beckely, WV 25802, for times and ticket information.

### **HORN IN THE WEST**

By Kermit Hunter. Call 704-264-2120 or write to the Southern Appalachian Hist. Association, Box 15 DTS, Boone, NC. 28607, for times and ticket information.

### **THE LEGEND OF DANIEL BOONE**

By Jan Hartman. Call 606-734-3346 or write to the Ford Harrod Drama Productions, Box 365, Harrodsburg, KY 40330, for times and ticket information.

### **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESSE JAMES**

By Frank Higgins. Call 816-532-0803, or write to the Clay County Dept. of Parks, 2619 NE 188th Street, Smithville, MO 64089, for times and ticket information.

### **THE LOST COLONY**

By Paul Green. Call 800-488-5012 (Box office) or 919-473-2127 (administration), or write to the Roanoke Island Historical Association, Box 40, Manteo, NC. 27954, for times and ticket information.

### **MARK TWAIN**

By Jane Iredale. Call 607-796-4111 (box office) or 607-732-2152, or write to the Mark Twain Arts Council, Box 265, Elmira, NY 14902, for times and ticket information.

### **STONEWALL COUNTRY**

By Don Baker. Also THE TEMPEST, VIRGIL POWERS, WHITE BEAR & RED ROSE. Call 703-463-3074 (box office) or 703-463-7088 (administration), or write to the Lime Kiln Arts, Box 663, Lexington, VA 24450, for times and ticket information.

### **YOUNG ABE LINCOLN**

By Billy Edd Wheeler. Call 812-937-4493 (box office) or 812-464-0029 (administration), or write to the University of S. Indiana, 8600 University Blvd., Evansville, IN 47712, for times and ticket information.

### **STRIKE AT THE WIND**

By Randolph Umberger. Call 919-521-3112, or write to the Robeson Historical Drama, Inc., Box 1059, Pembroke, NC 28358, for times and ticket information.

### **THE SWORD OF PEACE**

By William Hardy. Call 800-726-5115 (box office) or 919-376-6948 (administration), or write to the Snow Camp Historical Drama Association, Box 535, Snow Camp, NC 27609, for times and ticket information.

### **TECUMSEH**

By Allan E. Eckert. Call 614-775-0700 (box office) or 614-775-4100 (administration), or write to The Scioto Society, Box 73, Chillicothe, OH 45601, for times and ticket information.

### **TEXAS**

By Paul Green. Call 806-488-2220 (box office) or 806-655-2181 (administration), or write to the Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation, Box 268, Canyon, TX 79015, for times and ticket information.

### **TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE**

By Earl Hobson Smith. Call 703-523-1235, or write to the Lonesome Pine Arts and Crafts, Box 1976, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219, for times and ticket information.

### **TRUMPET IN THE LAND**

By Paul Green. Call 216-339-1132 (box office) or 216-364-5111 (administration), or write to the Ohio Outdoor Historical Drama Assoc., Box 450, New Philadelphia, OH 44663, for times and ticket information.

### **UNTO THESE HILLS**

By Kermit Hunter. Call 704-497-2111, or write to the Cherokee Historical Association, Box 398, Cherokee, NC 28710, for times and ticket information.

### **VIVA EL PASO!**

By Hector Serrano. Call 915-566-VIVA (box office) or 915-565-6900 (administration), or write to the El Paso Association for the Perf. Arts, Box 31340, El Paso, TX 79931-1340, for times and ticket information.

### **YOUR OBEDIANT SERVANT, A. LINCOLN**

By John Ahart. Call 217-632-7755 (box office) or 217-632-7754 (administration), or write to the Great American Peopel Show, Station A, Box 2178, Champaign, IL, 61825-2178, for times or ticket information.



# THE CULTURE OF THE REACH OF SONG

By Roxanne Dyer Powell

*"The traditional mountain culture itself is becoming precious, like the spring dogwood flower in April;...I want to write about the change and more importantly, what stays the same through change, so that we will recognize what remains truly mountain..."*

*(Bryon Herbert Reece, act two, scene two, THE REACH OF SONG)*

THE REACH OF SONG is filled with the rich cultural heritage of the Southern Appalachian mountains before, during and immediately after World War II.

Much of this culture is disappearing today as technology and lifestyles of the outside world creep into this once isolated part of America, and as young people leave the area to find jobs in the cities.

Among the cultural concepts included in THE REACH OF SONG are the mountaineer's close ties with his church and fellow men, his strong belief in an all-powerful omniscient God whose will takes precedence over all, even when that will is not understood.

The mountaineer also enjoyed a good time, though the more pious often frowned on such frivolous pursuits as dancing, non-gospel singing and music-making, and playing cards.

Still, for many, the mountaineer's innate love of music and his sense of rhythm could not be denied. Barn dances and house raising parties were often an occasion for merry-making, dancing and courtin'.

Fiddles, banjos, mandolins and guitars were favorites, as was the dulcimer, a traditional folk instrument. The mountaineer knew and rendered well in voice and instrument the old folk ballads handed down from his ancestors, as well as the sacred music of his church.

The mountaineer was naturally reticent, particularly in the presence of a stranger. He was clannish, keeping to himself and upholding his own family to the end.

He was independent-minded, which some interpreted as stubbornness; for when a mountaineer decided what he thought about a thing, there was almost no hope of changing his view.

Not surprisingly, then, mountain politics was a lively affair, sometimes resulting in hard feelings, knife-fights and vote-buying.

Medical doctors were little known in the mountains, and most mid-wifery and cures were dispensed



by "granny women" who knew the herbs and techniques which were most likely to help in cases of illness. When the cures failed, it was often perceived as "God's will."

It is not surprising that in a land of mists, shadowy hollows (hollers) and hidden coves that the mountaineer, who often traveled by mule or on foot, would develop superstitions and a belief in "haints" or souls of the dead. There are many tales in the mountains of haunted houses, wandering ghosts, and of hearing horse's hooves pounding by, with no horses in sight.

In early years, when "catamounts" or mountain lions roamed the woods and wolves and bears were still plentiful, there were real dangers in the forest, giving rise to many a colorful tale of a narrow escape.

But the mountaineer's satisfying way of life that he had honed through many generations was to greatly change before the mid-twentieth century.

With the coming of the TVA, electric power dams which displaced the mountaineer from his best farmland and the only way of making a living he had, and with World War II bringing the crashing reality that he was no longer cut off from the rest of the world, the cultural heritage of Appalachia was in for great upheavals.

Today, this heritage survives mainly through preservation projects, like THE REACH OF SONG, which endeavors to hold on to these fading lifestyles, interpreting them for today's audience in authentic detail.



# THE WHITTLES' BENCH

*"Them men sitting over there all day, loafing. Just whittling away at time at that whittler's bench...Talking about folks when they ain't around..."*  
(Bernice, act one, scene one, *THE REACH OF SONG*)



The whittler's bench (or loafer's bench) was an informal institution of every small rural mountain town many years ago. It was the domain of overall-clad older men who often coordinated whittlin' with chewin'. It was the spot where younger, working men stopped by on errands in town to pick up on the latest news (men seldom called their talk gossip), and it was the perfect location for young boys hoping to be men to learn about life.

Zell Miller, a veteran Georgia statesman who grew up in the small town of Young Harris, recalls his hometown whittler's bench in his book, *"THE MOUNTAINS WITHIN ME"* (Cherokee Publishing, c. 1985).

"As a barefoot boy growing up in the mountains of Young Harris before the time of television and without a male companion at home, I spent many, many hours hanging around what is known as the 'loafer's bench' at the country store where every night a dozen or more men would gather after the day's work

in the fields or woods to gossip, talk politics, tell tall tales and generally 'chaw the fat,' " Miller wrote.

"In the summer it was outside on a bench and on nail kegs; in the winter, inside around a pot-bellied stove...It was at least 10 feet long and from one end to the other the edges were carved by the whittlers' knives into impressive designs," Miller recalled. "It was an adventure in itself just going down to see what the day's idle sculpturing had wrought.

"The faces of the 'loafers' changed according to the time of the day, week, month and year...but the conversations, even when the stories were outrageous lies, were always fascinating," Miller writes, adding, "I didn't mind a bit being the only boy there or being called 'the young-un' and teased about not having 'enuf whiskers to be licked off by a kitty-cat.' "

Miller notes that "some of the regulars would come early on the days when they had good stories to tell, and they would tell them over and over, embellishing them with each telling, as each shift of listeners came in. Often the final versions were so much better than the first ones that the originators would go away convinced in their own minds that that was the way the events really occurred."



Photo by Jon C. Moon



# THE QUILTING BEE

*"Them women spending all day over there at the quilting bee. Making nothing but mean gossip, maybe a quilt or two on the side."*  
(Zack, act one, scene one, *THE REACH OF SONG*)

Quilts were not only a piece of art for the hardy womenfolk of Scotch-Irish heritage who settled in the hills of Appalachia; quilts were a practical necessity for keeping the family warm against the harsh winter cold in rough housing where snow often blew in through the cracks and the floor was earthen.

The only luxury these women allowed themselves was making the quilt pretty through patterns handed down for generations and shared among themselves.

Quilts were a way of recycling pieces of clothing that had served long and well, but were beyond mending further. Wedding dresses, shirt pieces, and any scrap of leftover fabric found their final showcase in quilts.

Once a quilt "top" was pieced, binding the top with a sandwiched layer of batting and a lining on the back side by quilting, or sewing them together, was a big job for one person, so often a "quilting bee" was formed.

Quilting bees were festive occasions for women who often struggled with heavy household duties without a visit from another of their gender for many months.

Appalachian women, like an invisible sisterhood, bonded together to help each other through any struggles they might face: pregnancy, childbirth, sickness, or caring for a new husband. The informal camaraderie of a quilting bee was a good place for young girls to learn what they would face as women, and it was good social therapy for the older ones.

## Make Your Own Quilt

One of the best quilt patterns for a beginner is the Irish Chain, shown here. This very old design was imported on the Mayflower from the Scotch-Irish homeland of many of the Appalachian settlers.

The block pattern is simple to cut and to piece. Trace the pattern of the two inch block shown here onto paper, then cut it out. Placing the pattern piece onto a piece of cloth, cut out five squares of a dark solid or print, and four of white or a lighter color for each nine-block square as shown.

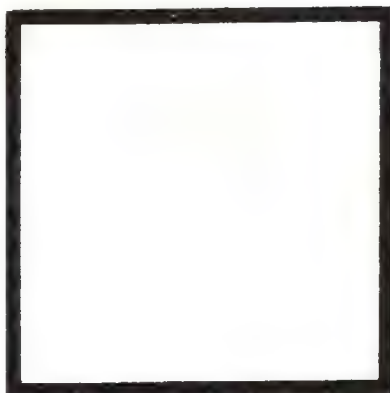


Photo by Jon C. Moon

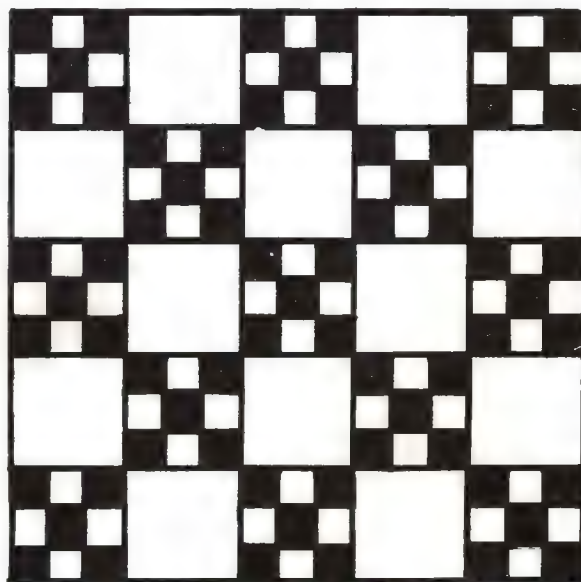
Sew the pieces together with a quarter-inch seam until all nine are assembled into an approximately six-inch block as shown in the illustration. Note that the dark solid or print blocks are in the middle of each pieced square.

When one nine-piece block is completed, place it on a piece of paper and use its dimensions to make a pattern for the alternating larger squares. Use this pattern to cut the larger squares from the same light color solid or white used in the pieced block.

Sew the nine-piece blocks together alternately with the large solid blocks as shown until the quilt is as large as desired. Or, if preferred, use the nine-piece block to make a sofa pillow.

A six-inch solid border around the perimeter of the quilt will make a nice finishing touch and a binding for sewing the quilt top to its lining after quilting.

(Quilting bee, gossip and chit-chat are optional.)





# MOUNTAIN MUSIC

*"Now the thing about an ole-timey mountain music that makes it different from most types of music is that the only way you can learn one of these songs is by listening to somebody else play it. Usually what would happen was a fella who wants to learn a tune goes over to some other fella's house and they get together and play..."*  
(James Farist, act one, scene one, THE REACH OF SONG)



Music, whether it was the religious music he sang in church, or the Saturday night hoe-down style, came naturally to the musically-talented mountaineer. He often crafted his own instruments, then taught himself to play by ear because he couldn't read music (or wouldn't have had the sheet music if he could have read it).

Singing schools were set up in itinerant singing masters who used a method called "shape notes" to help their semi-literate pupils to learn to sight-read music.

The original shape note music, dating back to Elizabethan England and revived in America in the early 1800s, used four basic shapes (a diamond, triangle, square and circle) to replace the round part of a written note. Once the shape was assigned a pitch relative to the scale, singers were able to quickly grasp sight-reading of music. In 1832, shape notes were expanded to include seven shapes to take in the more familiar seven note scale (do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do).

Today, except for some gospel music, shape music is almost forgotten.

The following piece of original music from "THE REACH OF SONG" was written by the drama's musical director, Phillip DePoy.

## REECE THEME



© P. DePoy, 1989



# THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH & RELIGION

*"Dear Lord,...keep us in your firm grasp...save us from the damnation that awaits those who stray from your flock...and...keep evil there on the other side of the mountain..." (Preacher, act one, scene three, "THE REACH OF SONG")*

The old-time mountain "fire and brimstone" preachers, with their pulpit-pounding and loud, forceful preaching under the hot, uninsulated roofs of the old meeting houses, could make the fires of hell come alive to the listening audience.

When revival time came, invariably in the hot summers when it was hot enough to make the pine sap drip from the beams in the pine church ceilings, everyone went to revival meetin'. There was no excuse for missing a meeting except very grave illness. Anyone who did not go to revival was considered a confirmed sinner or atheist.

The mountaineer believed the same doctrines as his parents and grandparents had. God's will came first and all else came afterward. God was not a concept to leave in the church on Sunday; God went with the mountaineer through every day of the week (even if he did take a nip of "shine" once in a

while). God was with him out in the fields, and God was there at the end of a hard day of plowing when he came home to rest on the front porch and watch the night come.

He might not always understand God's will in his life, but he accepted it regardless.

Church was also the center for some of the best times in the community. Homecoming, decoration day and dinner on the ground were times when all those who had moved away from the home community came back for the day or weekend.

They arrived by the carload from the cities to bunk in with relatives who were happy to extend hospitality, exchange news and take a look at folks they'd not seen for a year or more.

The dead were not forgotten, either. The graves were cleared of overgrowth, and old flowers were replaced with fresh ones.

That Sunday, the church pic-



nic tables groaned under the weight of enough country-style banana puddings, deviled eggs, cornbread, fried chicken, green beans and good home cooking to feast the eyes, let alone fill the stomach. Even those who were not particularly enthusiastic churchgoers went to this day of services, lining up to pile their plates high with the good home cooking of the congregation's ladies.

## LANGUAGE OF APPALACHIA

*"The picturesque language of North Georgia--the last remains of Milton and Chaucer's old English is fast becoming the ungrammatical jargon of the rest of the country. It isn't a poke folks are carrying anymore; it's a bag. Instead of being dusky dark--it's twilight. And what people now consider 'fun' used to be the hog-killingest time you could imagine!" (Byron Herbert Reece, act two, scene two, THE REACH OF SONG)*

No mention of the mountaineer would be complete without touching on his colorful language.

Very often, the mountaineer will seem to alter his words, substituting "seed" for "saw", "holp" for "helped" or "borned" for "born."

This is not a simple language corruption, however.

The mountain settlers brought their Elizabethan era language with them from the "old country" -- dales of England, Scotland and Ireland. Some of these speech patterns, including the above examples, were used in Chaucer's day.

Thus, the word "hit" for "it" or "hisn" for "his," are holdovers from the old English. Other such examples are "rest-es" for "rests", use of a double noun, such as a "house-cat," and "sarvice" for "service" as in the "sarvice berry tree" native to Appalachia which

bears a lightly-sweet red berry the mountaineer loved to eat.

Many in the mountains still use the parting phrase, "Come go with us," at the end of a visit, which was also held over from the old days. The correct reply, of course, was "Better stay longer."

So, rather than corrupting "good" English, as is commonly thought, the mountaineers preserved it, long beyond its normal lifespan elsewhere in America.

Other examples of mountain speech:

**win-der:** window  
**atter whol:** after a while  
**narry:** none  
**everwhat:** what ever  
**widder:** widow  
**holler:** hollow or valley

**right smart:** a lot  
**'sang:** ginseng  
**quile:** coil





## THE MOUNTAINEER'S BELOVED MOUNTAINS

*"I reckon I'd go anywhere, long as I could see Panther Bald from there. Wouldn't matter where I was then." (Susie Mae to Al, act one, scene two, "THE REACH OF SONG")*

Nothing helped the mountaineer keep his bearings more than the mountains he loved and traversed daily.

Many mountaineers knew every peak by name and used them as landmarks to maneuver by when hiking over them, taking a sack of corn to the mill to be ground, or when hunting ginseng or other wild herbs.

The mountains of north Georgia bear names like Horsetrough, Frozen Top, Blood, and Slaughter, Brasstown Bald, Chimney Top, Double Knobs and Bell--many named for their shape (like Bell and Double-Knobs) and others in memory of Indian battles fought there before the white man's time (Blood and Slaughter).

Still others, like Brasstown Bald, were named for their characteristics. At 4,784 feet above sea level, Brasstown Bald (which the Cherokees called Enotah, or "place of the fresh green") has little vegetation on its peak.

The Appalachian chain that stretches north and south in the eastern United States is the oldest range of mountains on earth. Once they reached great distances in the sky with rugged, jagged peaks--perhaps even higher than today's Rockies of the west. But with time's steady erosion, they became rounded and covered with vegetation.

It was the mountains' resemblance to their old English, Scottish and Irish homelands that caused the mountaineers' forbears to settle here in the first place.

The high horizon line of the mountains that surrounded the mountaineer made him comfortable; when he journeyed into the cities or the "flatlands" he was uneasy until he could return to the safety and familiarity of his mountain peaks.

The mountains suffered terrible erosion in the early part of this century when lumber companies denuded them for their timber and the great chestnut trees suffered a blight that killed the forest giants.

Today, through reclamation efforts, the mountains have once again gained their lushness, standing like mute giants over the same valleys where the old mountaineer and his ancestors before him lived.

## FOLK HEALING & SUPERSTITIONS

*"Oh, a doctor would've been a poor man in my town! Daddy believed castor oil cured whatever ailed you, and the more sick you were, the more he'd force down ya!...We had sassafrass tea in the summer to thin yer blood, and pine needle tea in the winter to thicken it." (Ezra Davenport (Maybelle) act one, scene one, THE REACH OF SONG)*

When anyone, young or old, was ailing, and home-devised cures didn't seem to be working, very often a "granny woman" was called in.

Using potions and plasters concocted of herbs and roots gathered in the mountains (usually mixed with generous portions of whiskey), she often combined her medicines with the scriptures for a sure cure.

For "everyday" aches and pains, and to forestall illness, the mountaineer made sure he got his regular doses of herb teas, like ginseng, pennyroyal (penny-rile), sassafrass or spicewood tea in the spring or summer.

A man couldn't go wrong taking God's medicines that grew free and wild in the woods, and mountaineers believed that doses should be taken liberally or not at all.

Closely tied to folk healing were the mountaineer's superstitions.

Mountain people followed closely the Zodiac signs and moon phases for planting and harvesting.

Corn could not be planted during a new moon, because it would turn out to be all stalk and no corn. Board shingles were never made on the new moon, either, since they would curl and crack and would not keep out the rain. Hog-butcherer also depended on the moon phases.

Very often, folk cures were rituals carried out on the right phase of the moon.

At one mountain home, an asthmatic child had two possible cures effected on her; in the first, a lock of her hair was driven by a peg into a hole in the doorpost. Then, she was passed through a split sapling at a spring behind the house.

Warts could be "charmed" off, usually to someone or something else.

Mountain people also believed a number of sayings, handed down from the generations before.

For instance, if a screech owl called from a chimney, it meant disaster to the family inside. If a rooster crowed after dark, there would be a death in the neighborhood.

If a woman dropped her dishcloth, or her nose itched, it meant company was coming, so she made a bit of something extra for dinner.

Ashes were never taken out of a chimney on a Friday, because something would be stolen from the house before the next Friday.

Folks also believed very much in the spirit world, though they wanted nothing to do with it. They knew of the existence of witches who could curse a household by drying up the milk cow, or driving a nail into a post each day to produce a voo-doo like effect on someone.

They also believed in "haints," or the wandering spirits of those returned from the dead.

It's not surprising that such an imaginative people who spent a great deal of time in the natural world would encounter "ghosts."

Walking barefoot along a mountain road at night to a church gathering with only a "coke bottle light" (a dangerous lighting device improvised by stuffing a rag wick into an empty cola bottle partly filled with flammable liquid) or dim kerosene lantern to see by, it was easy for the imagination to be stimulated by the slithering of something unseen across the foot, or for the eye to be fooled by moonlight glittering on beads of dew shimmering on a spider web.

It is interesting to note that with the advent of television and changes in lifestyle that few mountaineers nowadays report ghostly encounters.



# READIN', WRITIN', 'RITHMETIC & HARD BENCHES

*"If all that were true--that we in the mountains are first cousins to Al Capp's dogpatchers--then how could the little one-room school where I was raised in Choestoe have produced two state supreme court justices, one chief justice, and a state school superintendent? In fact, I think it is generally conceded that no comparable region of the United States has produced as many noted men as the mountain counties of North Georgia..."*  
(Byron Herbert Reece, act two, scene one, *THE REACH OF SONG*)



**The Susan B. Harris Chapel is the oldest building on the campus of Young Harris College.**

Education for most mountaineers was a rather crude affair; yet many mountain children were naturally gifted despite the lack of cultural exposure--perhaps because of growing up in households like Reece's, where singing long, memorized folk ballads was combined with early reading of difficult material like the Bible.

While not all families valued "book-learnin' " (under the supposed notion that it wasn't right to "get above your raisin' ") many mountain families, particularly in certain sections like Choestoe, saw an education as the step up necessary for their children to be successful in the world.

According to volume one of "Sketches of Union County History" (p. 35), "There are more college graduates from the Choestoe District according to population than any other place in Georgia."

Most children walked several miles to school each day, often barefoot. They "toted" their cold dinners, packed from breakfast, in an old lard tin. The mountaineer never had "lunch"--the midday meal (dinner) was traditionally the largest of the day.

The school was a single-room, naturally air-conditioned shack in which children had to gather around a pot-bellied stove in winter to keep fingers, noses and toes from being frost-bitten.

"Desks" were most often crude benches, though some schools managed a few "boughten" desks so students didn't have to study from their laps and had seat backs to lean against.

All grades studied and recited together in the one

room, with younger children learning from recitations of the older pupils. The teacher had to maintain discipline among all age groups, and often did so with a hickory switch applied liberally to the backsides of mischief-makers.

Girls played with girls and boys played with boys. Girls often liked to talk quietly and be "lady-like" while the boys played the rougher games of wrestling, "mad-dog" tag, rowdy ball games and even rock-throwing.

Mountain children had an almost endless repertoire of games, and were inventive enough to make up their own.

With much of their time claimed in chores like milking, feeding stock, hoeing corn, carrying water and the like, mountain youngsters learned early to make the most of their free moments.

They carved their own toys and used bits and pieces of odds and ends to construct toy automobiles after they had seen their first one.

When it came time for a college education, Young Harris College, founded in 1886 by Rev. Artemas Lester for the purpose of educating enterprising mountain youth, was one place to go. With its program of work on the college farm in exchange for tuition, many young people who could not otherwise have gotten a college education were able to do so.



**This old one room school, Pine Grove, was built in the early 1900s in the Scataway community of Towns County. It is now preserved on the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.**



# BY THE SWEAT OF HIS BROW — LIVELIHOOD

*"I've got to get my fodder stacked and topped; got to get my potatoes hoed and my carrots pulled; got to get my fences mended and cows branded, or my family will go hungry through the winter..." (Byron Herbert Reece, act two, scene two, THE REACH OF SONG)*

With limited educational opportunities, lack of industrialization in the mountains and no electricity, the mountaineer had almost no way of making a living except farming.

Except for a few teaching jobs which didn't pay much, being a store-keeper or merchant, or holding public office, there were almost no jobs in the mountains and very little chance of making cash.

Still, the mountain lifestyle didn't demand much cash. The mountain family either "made-do" or did without.

Mountain women were adept at carding wool, spinning it and weaving it into blankets to keep the family warm. They pieced quilts, knitted socks, did laundry the hard way in an old iron washpot where clothes were boiled and then beaten or rubbed over a rub board.

Mountain men made whatever furniture was needed. Some became experts at caning chairs with hickory splints. If a man wanted a fiddle or other musical instrument, all he had to do was give somebody else's a good inspection; then he went home and made one for himself, finishing it off with a homemade bow strung up with hair cut from his horse's tail.

If the mountain man needed a little cash in the fall to pay his taxes or a debt or two, he simply wandered into the woods for a while (which he enjoyed anyway) and dug a little ginseng to pay his bill.

It was an independent lifestyle, nearly free of entanglements. A man was a free spirit, who didn't need either the "gover-mint" nor an employer to tell him what to do. That was one reason the mountain man preferred farming to working for someone else.

Using a mule and a one-horse plow, he broke the sod in flatlands,



and even on steep mountainsides if that was all he had and raised many crops, most notably corn.

Corn was an important staple in the diet. It could be fed to either man or beast and prepared a number of ways—in bread, mush or grits.

It could even be made into more profitable moonshine, and some did just that, since it was said corn brought more by the gallon than it did by the bushel. Most mountaineers did not particularly like the production of 'shine. For some, it was simply the only way to put cash money in their pockets to raise their families on.

By about the 1940s, many farms replaced the old stand-by mule with a gas or diesel-powered tractor. It could do as much work in a day as several mules and men. More acreage of crops would mean

a more decent standard of living for the mountain man who earned his living in the sweat of his brow.

When the mountain man sat down at night in the glow of the kerosene lamp to his simple supper of cornbread, beans and milk, he knew that it was his work which put the very food on the table which his family ate.

When he sat on his front porch and watched the evening mists wash over the land, he felt secure and content, just knowing that as long as he had good farmland, the will of the good Lord was with him, and the sun rose tomorrow, he'd have food on the table.

## MOUNTAIN PUZZLE

A mountaineer is puzzled. He must get a fox, a chicken and a sack of corn across the creek in his boat, but the boat will hold only himself and one of the other three items in a single trip. How can he safely get all three across. Remember not to leave the fox alone with the chicken, or the chicken alone with the corn.

(solution on page 35)





# THE COMING OF TVA

*"You can say what you want and make fun about them houses being under water and all, but those lakes are bringing jobs and prosperity to these mountains! That there dam at the end of the lake means that the TVA can get electricity to more folks in these parts and that'll be the greatest thing that happened since Columbus discovered America!"*  
(Emma, act two, scene two, *THE REACH OF SONG*)

In 1937, under the directive of Congress to improve navigation and control flooding in the Tennessee Valley, the TVA began building a number of dams in the area to hold back the pure mountain creek water that had flowed out of the earth for millions of years.

Mountain farmers living in the creek bottomlands were distressed to learn that TVA intended to flood the lowest-lying areas, which meant the loss of some of the area's best and most fertile farmlands. Some folks refused to leave their family farms until the last minute when the lake waters began to cover their old homeplaces where generations of their families had been born and raised. Even their family graveyards had been uprooted and moved.

But other mountaineers, while sympathizing with their neighbors' losses, were happy to know that soon TVA would bring cheap plentiful electric power into their homes.

Before TVA, only a few homes in small areas near river plants had electricity part-time which was often turned off after a certain hour. But TVA brought power into the reach of every man, rich or poor, near town or in the deepest mountain hollow.

The Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation was formed in 1938 from a local Rural Electrification Administration cooperative, made up of about 150 area citizens.

This group helped with education, wiring of homes and even helped with group purchases of electric appliances.

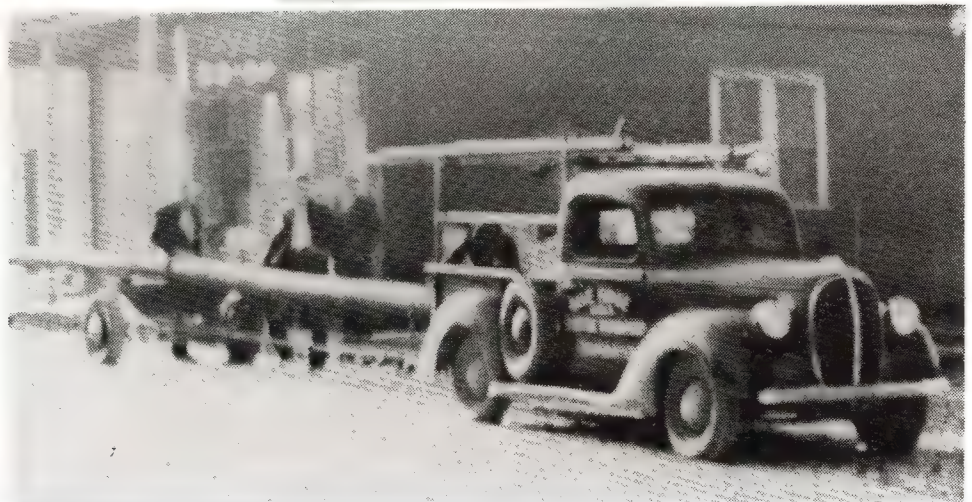
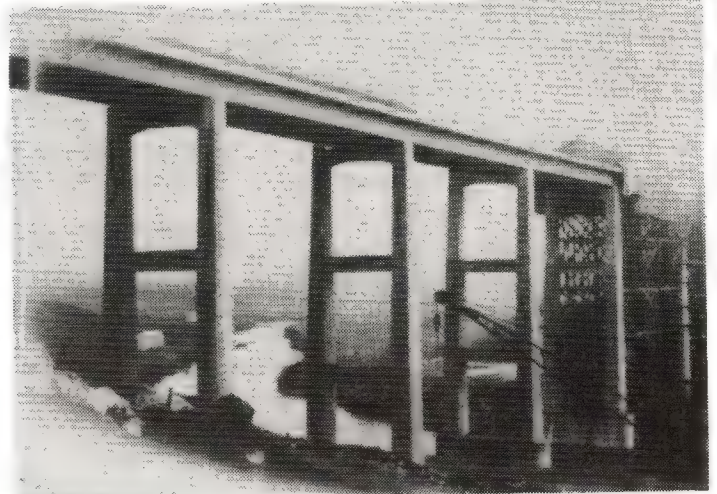
Now, instead of having to go out to the spring house at the branch for milk and butter, all the family had to do was reach in the icebox. Instead of boiling clothes in the washpot, the lucky mountain woman could let the wringer-washer do the work. No need to light the old kerosene lamp at night or go to bed early. Electric lights stood ready at the flip of a switch.

Of course, the new electricity also meant there was a monthly bill to pay where there had been none before, and there were the new appliances to pay for. The mountaineer would have to find some other way of making a living than merely subsisting off the land.

Still, the construction of the lakes brought a financial windfall for some while the work lasted. Jobs clearing the lake bottoms, building new roads, bridges and constructing dams brought real cash income to many families as the Depression ebbed away.

## SOLUTION:

He takes the chicken across first, leaving the fox with the corn. He comes back and takes the corn across next, and takes the chicken back with him. He puts the chicken on the shore and takes the fox across the creek. He leaves the fox with the corn and goes back for the chicken. When he returns, all three are safely across.





## WORLD WAR II's LONG ARM

*"I just heard on the radio at home! The Japanese just bombed Pearl Harbor!" (Sally Mae, act one, scene three, "THE REACH OF SONG")*

It was a shrinking world, as the mountaineer found out by listening to his new, electric Philco radio.

He was just beginning to appreciate the advantages of electricity when news of the spreading war in Europe began to trouble his soul.

Before electricity came into his life, he'd never worried about much beyond the other side of the mountain. As he walked behind his mule, chanting and singing songs that were centuries old, all he knew was peace, though he was willing enough to fight if he had to.

Suddenly, with radios in nearly every household, he was able to keep up with world events. From a farm at the base of Blood Mountain in Union county or a cabin at the base of Bell Mountain in Towns county, the news that came over the air waves was disturbing indeed.

Many, never exposed to world events before, wanted to believe that, bad as the German armies seemed, they wouldn't amount to much. Someone would turn them back before they struck for America. Besides, the war was someone else's fight. Every man had a right and a duty to tend to his own business.

But Hitler didn't go away. And when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the mountaineer knew where his duty lay. He didn't shirk it, either. He'd fought before to make this country free, and he'd do it again.

Mountain men signed up in droves without waiting to be drafted. They made up some of the best soldiers in the army, too, and were often put in the toughest combat situations.

Boys who'd studied in one room mountain schools about foreign lands with strange-sounding names suddenly found themselves standing on those distant shores in Europe and the South Pacific.

Back home, their folks prayed constantly and scanned the skies uneasily whenever they went outside. For once in their lives, the mountains did not feel completely safe to the mountaineers. They feared numerous plots from the Japanese and Germans and fears and suspicions ran high. Every night, each radio in the community never lacked for ears to listen to the updates or the dreaded news of a serious defeat in an area where their boys were fighting.

Many a mountain home still bears photos, browned from aging, carefully and lovingly framed, of the boys who never came back.

Their families know the names of the foreign spots where their boys fell victim to the enemy, whether on a south Pacific island or in occupied Europe.

The world might forget these boys who bought the country back with the ultimate price, but their families never will.

## APPALACHIA TODAY

*"Most important thing to remember is where you came from. If you don't know where you came from, it's gonna be twice as hard getting to where you're going. Traditions and things from back when, well, they should help us all into tomorrow, that's all. Something to help find your way." (Larry, act two, scene three, THE REACH OF SONG)*

Today's Appalachia retains much of its natural beauty, though its population is growing and homes are dotting more of the hills and valleys.

Its young people have been forced to leave for the cities to find work, and many will spend their entire working lives elsewhere, returning only in retirement.

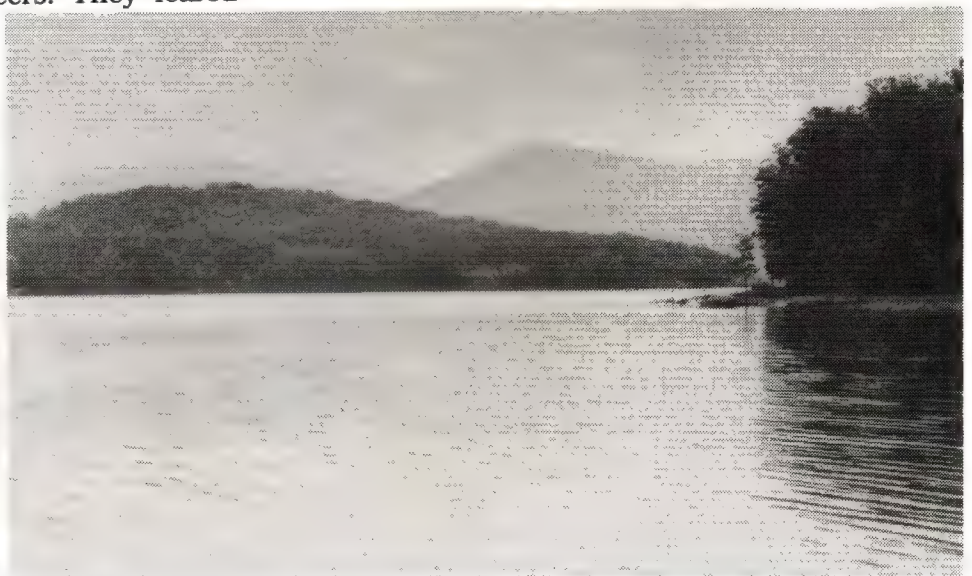
Many of the picturesque old barns have fallen in, and much of the hand-craft culture has died out, preserved by only a few dedicated craftsmen.

Yet, there can still be heard the twang of the colorful language of the native people, folks still love a fiddlin' hoedown on a Saturday night, and many hills and hollows still boast country churches where folks gather to worship on Sunday.

As awareness spreads about the special culture of this region, some of that culture is being revived and preserved through efforts like "THE REACH OF SONG"—so that those who never knew the culture can learn of it; and those who grew up with the culture can enjoy it again.

The mountain people have, for many years, had to venture from home for a glimpse of the outside world. Today, the outside world comes to them—for a look at life the way it used to be, and maybe, sometimes, the way it ought to be again.

*"Susie Mae and Al were like hundreds of our young people that left here, made some money, then spent the rest of their lives trying to figure out how they could come home. They're still out there, in Ohio, Atlanta, or New York, waiting for jobs to come to town so they can come home, too." (Harry, act two, scene three, THE REACH OF SONG)*





# GLOSSARY OF TERMS, PLACES AND PEOPLE

**Amen bench**---in church, the bench where the deacons and church elders often sat and voiced their agreement with the preacher through frequent, fervent "ah-mens!"

**Bald Mountain**---At 4,784 feet, the highest mountain in Georgia. Its Cherokee name was "Enotah" (ee-no-tah), meaning "place of the fresh green."

**Batley Hospital**---the state tuberculosis sanatorium in Rome, Georgia where Byron Herbert Reece was sent to recuperate.

**Blairsville**---The county seat of Union County, and the nearest town to the Reece farm (a distance of about ten miles).

**Blood Mountain**---The second-highest mountain in Georgia. The massive, towering mountain on the southernmost end of Union county is only a few hundred feet shy of Brasstown Bald's 4,784 feet (highest in the state). Byron Herbert Reece's birthplace and later farm is very near the base of Blood Mountain's north slopes. The name "Blood" was given to it sometime in the distant past, along with the name of its adjacent peak, "Slaughter" because of a bloody battle fought on the two mountains by the Cherokees and the Creeks long before the white man came here.

**Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation**---the local non-profit electric utility cooperative headquartered in Young Harris, chartered in 1938 with the goal of providing reliable electric service to members at reasonable rates; it serves several counties in North Georgia and North Carolina and gets much of its power from the TVA.

**Chatuge**---a TVA-created lake which lies in Towns County, Georgia and Clay County, North Carolina.

**Choestoe (Cho-ee-sto-ee)**---The militia district in Union County, Georgia where Byron Herbert Reece was born. Choestoe is Cherokee for "Place of the Dancing Rabbits."

**Clark Dyer**---(Micajah Clark Dyer, Jr.) a Choestoe inventor who lived on Stink Creek in the mid-1800s. He is rumored to have constructed a trial "flying machine" years before the Wright brothers' Kitty Hawk flight.

**Cobweb supper**---a social event in which a young woman prepared a dinner for two and put it into a box tied at the end of a long string. The string was wound through the woods. A young man would choose a string, follow it, and share the meal in the company of the young lady to whose dinner the string was attached.

**Dr. Nicholson**---Dr. J.M. Nicholson, principal of Union County High School, recognized the talent of Byron Herbert Reece and attempted to encourage Reece's literary development.

**Decoration Day**---an annual day in which church members gathered together to neaten and decorate the graves of loved ones; usually the event included a "dinner on the ground" to feed the workers.

**"Good hand"**---a phrase meaning someone is skilled at something, as in "he's a good hand at writing"

**Emma Reece**---Byron Herbert Reece's mother

**Hiawassee**---the county seat of Towns County; its Cherokee translation is "place of the pretty fawn"

**Juan Reece**---pronounced (Jew-ann)---Byron Herbert Reece's father

**Lockheed**---a Marietta, Georgia firm which assembles aircraft, much of it for the military

**North Georgia News**---the Union County legal organ and weekly newspaper located in Blairsville

**Nottely River**---the name for a large tributary flowing out of Choestoe valley into the TVA-created lake of the same name near Blairsville, Georgia

**Ralph McGill**---the crusading editor of the Atlanta Journal and Constitution for many years; McGill, who had much influence in the south and who appreciated literary works, noticed the work of Byron Herbert Reece when Reece was still a student at Young Harris College.

**Sassafrass**---the root of the sassafrass shrub which has a pungent, spicy flavor and which makes a flavorful tea when steeped in hot water and sweetened.

**Signs**---as in "planting by the signs." The mountain people followed closely the signs of the Zodiac as outlined in the Farmer's Almanac in planting crops and many other activities.

**St. Elmo's Fire**---a discharge of electricity that can occur in a storm, creating a flaming phenomenon.

**Suches**---a small mountain community located in the rugged, mountainous section of Union County's southern end, a few mountains over from where Reece lived.

**Todd's Dahlia Farm**---in Lost Hollow in the Suches area, this farm produced many varieties of dahlias for many years before it closed, including a raspberry pink dahlia which Mr. Alvin Todd named "Byron Herbert Reece."

**TVA--Tennessee Valley Authority**---created by Congress in the late 1930s with the directive to improve the Tennessee Valley (areas in eastern Tennessee, north Georgia and Western North Carolina). Improvements included educating farmers about erosion, and building dams to create huge reservoirs used to assist navigation in the larger rivers, to control flooding, and to generate cheap hydro-electric power. It was the TVA, and the Rural Electrification Administration which brought cheap, uniform electrical service to the mountain area.

**Towns County**---a small county lying east of Union County in northeast Georgia. Its county seat is Hiawassee. Towns was named after Governor George W. Towns, and the county was formed from portions of Rabun County on its east and Union County to the west. Young Harris and Young Harris College lie in the western end of Towns County.

**Trackrock Gap**---a low-lying gap near the east border of Union County and the west border of Towns County which contains a number of soapstone rocks bearing numerous curious markings of ancient date. Some experts believe the artifacts pre-date Columbus and were possibly made by the mound-builder Indians or an even earlier tribe, all of whom pre-date the Cherokees in this region. Some experts put the markings' origins at 3,000 years before the birth of Christ.

**Trahltya**---(trah-lic-tah)---The Indian name for the lake at Vogel State Park. The lake was named after an Indian princess buried at an intersection known as Stone Pile Gap several miles from the Suches area.

**Union County**---a county in northeast Georgia in which Byron Herbert Reece was born and lived his life. When a name was being discussed for the new county, it is said that one man rose up and said, "Let it be named Union, for none but Union men reside in it," in reference to the support of the Union from many of the area's citizens. Blairsville is Union's county seat.

**Vogel State Park**---one of the most popular state parks in Georgia, Vogel lies at the base of Blood Mountain. Its man-made lake Trahltya covers the old homeplace in which Byron Herbert Reece was born. Wolf Creek feeds the lake, then spills over the dam and winds downstream to the Reece farm where Byron Herbert spent the bulk of his life farming and writing.

**Walasi-Yi**---(wah-lah-see-yeh)the Cherokee name for the gap near Blood Mountain which allowed a north and south passage. It meant "place of the frogs." Thus the gap was called "Frogtown gap" by locals before the new highway (19-129) was engineered through the mountain pass by a man named Neel in the 1930s, and renamed for him. Local sentiment was against the renaming, and there are some today who still refer to it as "Frogtown Gap."

**Young Harris**---a small village lying in the western end of Towns County, the town was formerly called McTyre but was named after Judge Young Lofton Gerding Harris, an early benefactor of Young Harris College.

**Wolf Creek**---The creek which feeds Lake Trahltya at Vogel State Park and which flows at the back of the Reece farm homeplace today.

**Young Harris College**---a two-year Methodist college founded in 1886 by the Rev. Artemas Lester to serve the educational needs of mountain youth. The college is a dominant landmark in the small town of Young Harris. Byron Herbert Reece taught at Young Harris College and took his life there in 1958.





## FOX AND GEESE — Traditional Appalachian Board Game

The traditional board game, "Fox and Geese" was often played in the Appalachian home generations ago.

To play the two-player game, you need two tokens of one color, and 22 tokens of another color. Traditionally, colored corn grains were used, usually with red or yellow corn grains representing the foxes, and white grains for the geese. Pop bottle caps were also favorite tokens.

Today, you might try 22 pennies for the geese, and two dimes for the foxes.

The objective of the game for the goose player is to corner both the foxes before too many geese are lost. If you are the foxes, your aim is to capture as

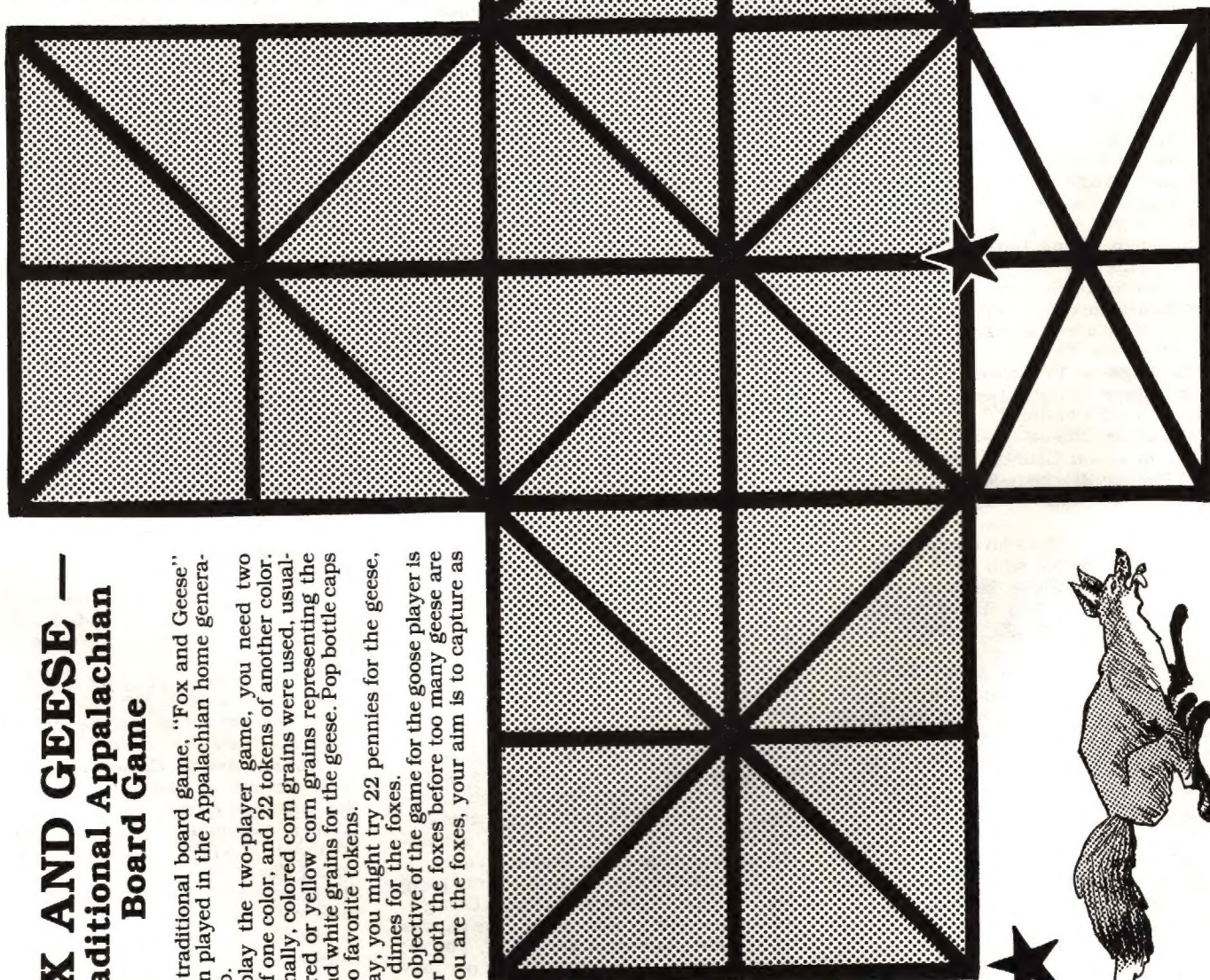
many geese as possible without being cornered. The foxes' den is the shortest box (on the right below). The foxes are placed at the intersecting corners as shown.

In setting up the board, geese are placed at all intersections and corners in the barnyard (the rest of the board) expect for the starred positions. They can, however, later move to the starred spots.

The geese can never enter the foxes' den, while the foxes can retreat there if they choose. Both foxes and geese can move to any empty spot in any direction (except as already noted). Geese cannot jump foxes—they hem them in.

The fox player moves first, either jumping a goose (as in checkers) and moving to one of the empty corners, moving to the center spot, or retreating in to the den.

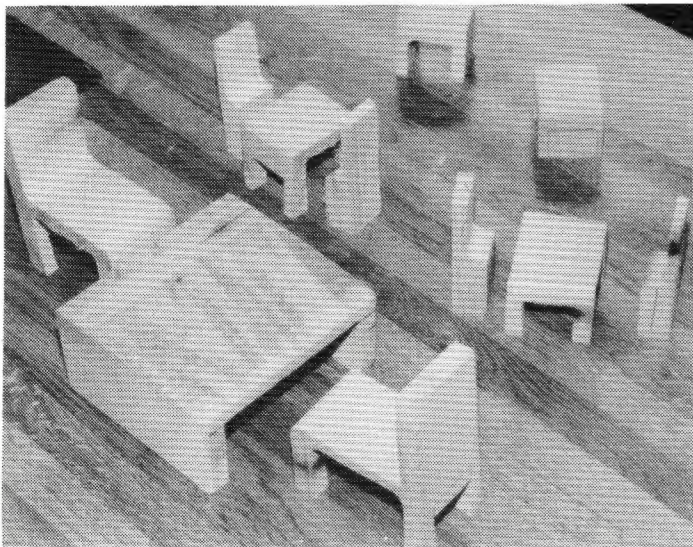
Goose players must single-mindedly strive to corner the foxes so that they are unable to move. When both foxes are cornered or all geese are captured, the game is over.





# OLD-TIME RIDDLES & PUZZLES

1. What's older than Adam if he were still alive, yet is only four weeks old and never will be five?
2. What's round as a ball, sharp as an awl, lives in the summer and dies in the fall?
3. Not between heaven and earth, not on a tree. I've told you, now you tell me.
4. What is it that you throw away the outside and cook the inside, then you eat the outside and throw away the inside?
5. Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Spell that with four letters, and I'll give you my shoes.
6. The more it dries, the wetter it gets.
7. This many times I've seen, and I've heard said, if you throw it up green, it comes down red.
8. How much dirt is in a hole two feet by three feet by four feet?
9. Name three things that have eyes that can't see.
10. Name two things that have tongues but can't talk.

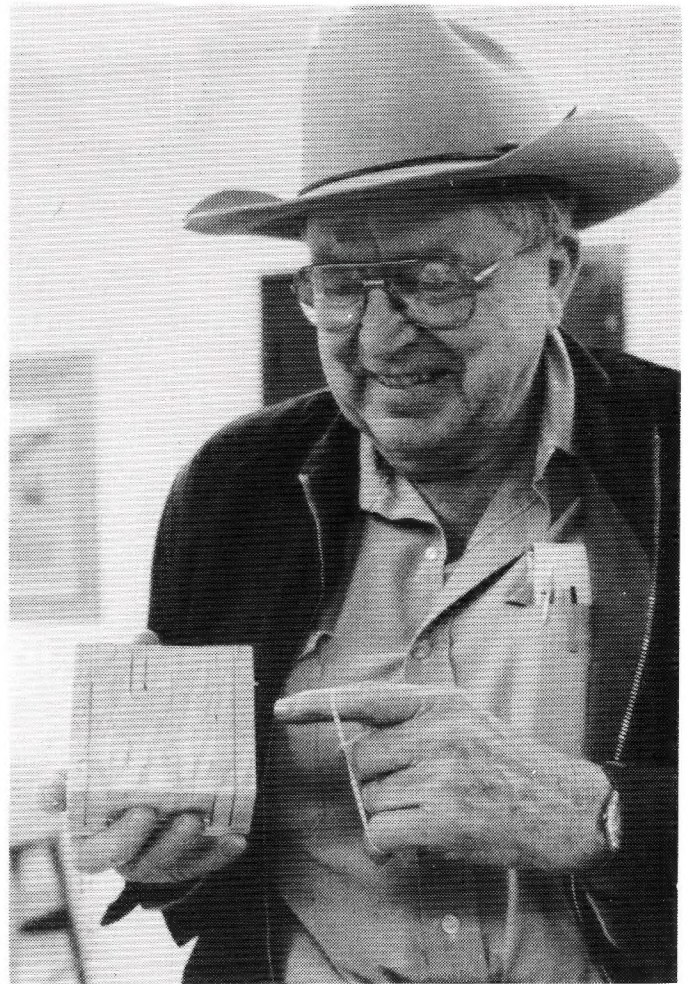


## ANSWERS

1. (The moon)
2. (chestnut burr)
3. ("Knot" on a tree.)
4. (ear of corn)
5. ("T-h-a-t" has four letters.)
6. (dish cloth)
7. (Watermelon)
8. (None--there is no dirt in a hole.)
9. (Potatoes, stoves and needles.)
10. (wagon and a shoe.)



## THE REACH OF SONG



Towns County resident J.B. Nichols demonstrates a compact "folk toy" - how one small wooden block here...

...can be made into a doll-sized set of furniture here.

## PRODUCERS OF THIS SOUVENIR PROGRAM

This souvenir program was designed and written by the husband and wife team of Jim and Roxanne Powell. Jim undertook most of the production responsibilities and artistic elements, while Roxanne did most of the writing. Many local folks will recognize them through their work with the Towns County Herald, where Jim works as news editor and Roxanne works as a reporter.

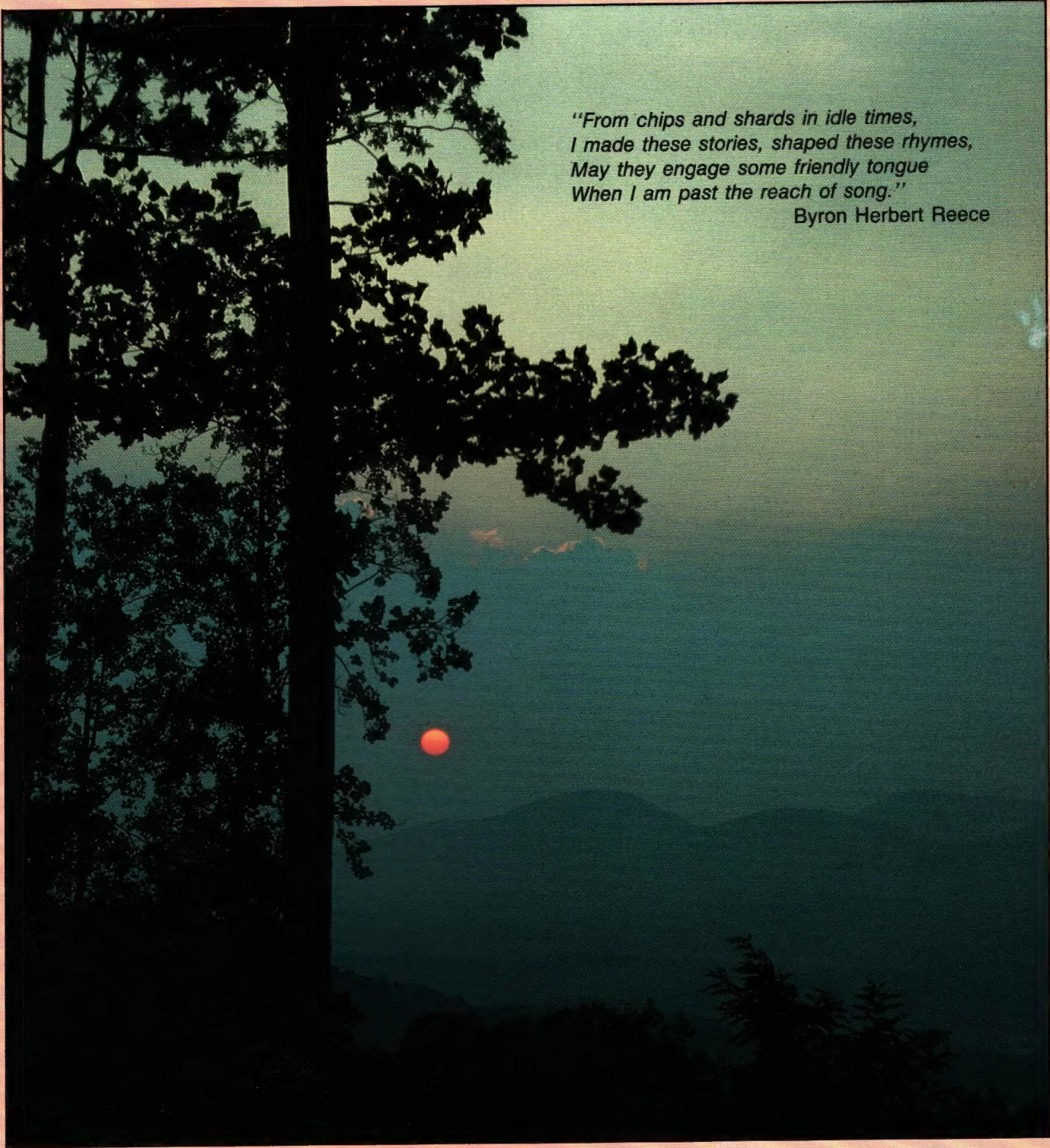
In addition to their newspaper work, Roxanne writes a weekly column, "Mountain Moods," while Jim is a syndicated editorial cartoonist whose work appears in 11 papers in north Georgia.

Production of the "Reach of Song" program held special interest for the couple, both of whom have life-long and multi-generational ties to this area which Byron Herbert Reece chronicled in his poetry.

Both Jim and Roxanne would like to extend their personal thanks of appreciation to Sherri Clark and Sara Stillwell, without whose valuable assistance, patience and cooperation this program could not have been completed.

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Printed by Currahee Printing Co.





*"From chips and shards in idle times,  
I made these stories, shaped these rhymes,  
May they engage some friendly tongue  
When I am past the reach of song."*

Byron Herbert Reece

***The Reach of Song***  
an Appalachian Drama



Produced by Georgia Mountains  
Regional Development Center